

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 265.



"Reckon I'd better travel," said Dandy Jim. "You've got too many airtquakes round hyer fur me."

ALONE

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

Here in the twilight's shadows
I'm sitting all alone,
And my thoughts are drifting backward
To days forever flown.
And I think of faces, hidden
Under the drifted snow,
Where the robins sing in summer,
And the daisies bud and blow.
Oh, faces of loved and lost ones
Hidden deep under snow,
Oh, voices whose tender music
Was hushed so long ago.
If you could but come to us, sometime,
The width of a grave across,
To tell us we are not forgotten,
We could better bear your loss.

Overland Kit:

OR,
THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF
DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN FROM RED DOG.

"WHAT'S the matter, Dick?" asked the girl,
anxiously.

"Oh, nothing; only a little nervous attack,
that's all," he replied, recovering himself with a
great effort.

Talbot sat facing the door, while Jimmie had
her back to it, so that she had not noticed the
entrance of the stranger.

"Good-evenin', Miss Jimmie," said Bill, the
driver, advancing to the girl. Mr. Rennet and
Bernice followed; both of them had seen so
many strange sights in their western journey,
that they were not much surprised when Bill
introduced Jimmie as the hotel owner.

"I'll do the best I can for you, Miss," said
Jimmie, politely, when she learned that it was
the intention of the strangers to remain with
her for a week or so. "But, we're pretty
well crowded; we hain't got many rooms, but
I reckon I'll be able to fix you, someway."

"You can have my room, Jimmie," Talbot
said, his head down, resting on his arms, which
were laid upon the table, and thus hiding his
features from view.

Bernice and the old lawyer looked at Tal-
bot in astonishment, his appearance was so
different from the rest of the inmates of the
saloon.

"But, where will you go, Dick?" asked Jim-
mie, anxiously.

"Oh, anywhere; I'll get along well enough,"
Dick replied, never raising his head from the
table.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," Bernice
said, in the low, sweet, lady-like voice,
that was such a contrast to the clear, ringing
tones of Jimmie.

Talbot shivered when the tones of Bernice's
voice fell on his ears, as though an icy wind,
fresh from the north, had blown full upon him.

"This way, Miss; I'll show you to your
room at once; and you, sir," said Jimmie, ad-
dressing the old lawyer, "I'll have to put you
in the room with Bill, here. It's the best I can
do."

"You'll be as snug as a pint of bourbon in
a miner's gullet, old hoss!" Bill exclaimed,
slapping Rennet familiarly on the back, with
his huge paw. "Say, I hope you allers keep
your own side of the bed, 'cos when I bunk
in with strangers, I allers go to bed with spurs
on."

"Yes, yes, I see—quite a joke," said the old
lawyer, affecting to enjoy the remark of the
facetious stage-driver, though, in his heart, he
considered the fellow's insolence.

As Bernice passed by Bill, following Jimmie,
she said, quickly:

"What is the name of that gentleman in
black?" indicating Talbot, as she spoke.

"Injun Dick!"

"Indian Dick?" Bernice exclaimed, in amazement,
at the strange appellation.

"Yes, sirree! Injun Dick Talbot. He's the
big shanghai round this ranche."

Without further words, Bernice left the room,
following Rennet and the old lawyer. She had
taken a sudden and strange interest in the
stranger, whose voice alone she had heard;
whose face she had not seen.

Bernice found that the room assigned to her
was in the front of the building and looked out
upon the only street of which Spur City could
boast.

It was small, plainly-furnished, but fitted up
neatly and tastily. A woman's hand, though,
was plainly evident in the simple adornments.

In the silence of the little room, Bernice
pondered first on the man who bore the strange
name of "Injun Dick," and then upon the
masked horsemen who had pronounced her
name at the first glance.

"Something tells me that here in this place
I shall find what I seek," she murmured, as
she prepared to disrobe for bed.

Hardly had she commenced to undress, when
a terrible series of yells, coming from the
saloon below, fell upon her ears. She paused to
listen.

After Jimmie and the two strangers left the
saloon, Talbot raised his head and looked
around him. His face was pale as the face of
the dead; great drops of sweat stood like orient
pearls upon his white forehead, which the
broad-brimmed slouch hat had protected from

the hot sun-kiss, that had bronzed the rest of
his face. A strange expression was upon his
usually calm features. What had so excited
Injun Dick, who had been known to face a
dozen angry men, with brandishing weapons
in their hands, with a smile upon his lip and a
bitter taunt upon his tongue?

"I must get out of this," he murmured, rest-
lessly; "the mountain canon and the shelter of
the pines must be my home till this woman is
far from here! How beautiful she is. For the
sake of a woman like her, I'd walk over
burning coals; but I must fly from her. I feel
that she will bring me ill luck; I must get out
—levant!"

Talbot arose from his seat and approached
the bar.

"Give me some whisky," he said.

The Chinaman handed down the bottle, in
astonishment. He had never known Talbot to
call for raw spirits before.

Dick filled a glass brimming full, and drank
it off as if it had been so much water.

"The liquor seems to have lost its strength,"
he murmured, an ugly look in his restless
dark eyes. "How much, heathen?"

"Six bitee," replied Ah Ling.

Talbot tossed the money upon the counter,
and turned to leave the saloon. He longed for
the fresh air that, laden with the balm of the
pine, swept from the white peaks down along
the river valley.

The potent spirits had lost their power. The
nervous action of the brain, roused into being,
defied the fumes of the whisky to overcome it.
Yet Talbot would fain have stilled the busy
thoughts that were working in his brain.

As Talbot turned, a burly, black-bearded fel-
low, gigantic in size, clad in a ragged, red-
flannel shirt, butternut-colored breeches stuck
into huge boots, and a high-crowned felt hat,
rolled, with an unsteady motion, into the sa-
loon. The stranger was covered with yellow
mud from head to foot, as if he had lain down
and taken a bath in the middle of the street.

A belt strapped around his waist supported
two revolvers and a huge bowie-knife.

After the stranger got fairly into the saloon,
he steadied himself and looked around him
with an air of drunken gravity. All eyes, of
course, were fixed upon him.

"I'm the—man—from—Red—Dog, (hic),
wake snakes an' come at me! Yar—who-oo-
oop!" and he indulged in a prolonged yell.

It was the drunken yell of the representative
from Red Dog that had disturbed Bernice in
her chamber above.

After delivering his defiance, the stranger
looked around him.

"Whar's the man called Injun Dick—the
feller that wears kid gloves an' store clothes?"
howled the stranger. "Let him step out an'
look at me! I kin frighten him into a grease-
spot!"

"My name is Dandy Jim from Red Dog!"

Then the stranger executed a war-dance in
the center of the saloon.

"Set 'em up ag'in! Come an' see me! Yar-
who-oo-o!" Again the stranger yelled with all
the strength of his powerful lungs.

With a quick step, but a calm face, Talbot
strode forward and confronted the Red-Dog-
ite.

"See here, my friend, you had better go
home and go to bed; that's the best place for
you," he said, quietly.

"Halloo, Tom Thumb! how are ye?" ex-
claimed the red-shirted stranger, in sarcasm.
"Hain't you better go home! Does yer moth-
er know yer out? Stand away, sonny, or I'll
blow at yer an' knock yer over. I want ter
see Injun Dick! I'm the man from Red-Dog! I'm
part sea-lion, an' the rest on me is grizzly
b'ar. I kin outrun, outdriak, or chaw up any
man in the Reese valley! Peel an' go fur me!
I'm yer antelope!"

And again the stranger executed a war-
dance around the center of the room, accom-
panied by a series of yells that would have done
credit to a Pawnee Indian.

The actions of the giant were ridiculously
funny, despite his warlike intentions.

"See here, now, you've cavorted round here
long enough; stop your noise, or I'll put you
out," Talbot said, laughing at the antics of the
whisky-soaked miner, in spite of his efforts to
appear grave.

"You put me out? You?" asked the miner,
balancing himself unsteadily on his legs.

"Why, I kin eat you, I kin! Maybe you
think I've h'isted too much benzine? I kin
clean out this hull ranche, I kin! Who are you,
anyway?"

"My name is Dick Talbot."

"You're my antelope!" cried the miner,
drawing a revolver from his belt. "I been
huntin' you!"

But before the giant could use his weapon,
there was a quick movement on the part of In-
jun Dick. His right arm drew back and shot
out, sudden and unexpected as the flash of the
lightning; a sharp, whip-like crack resounded
through the room. It was the iron-like knuc-
kles of Dick striking on the bloated face of the
miner.

With a howl of pain and rage combined, the
giant went over backward, against the door of
the saloon; on his left cheek, under his eye,
was a terrible gash, nearly two inches long, as
clean a cut as though the cheek had been slit
by a knife. It was the mark of Injun Dick's
terrific blow.

The man from Red-Dog reclined against the
door, and looked around him with a stupefied
air. The blow had been so sudden and terrible
in its force, that it was plain that he did not
realize what had occurred.

A right peart airtquake, beats Red Dog
all hollow," he exclaimed. "Did it knock any-
body else down?"

Then his eyes fell upon Talbot, who, with
levelled revolver, stood in the center of the sa-
loon.

"Halloo! what 'er 'bout?" the miner cried;
"turn that t'other way."

"You cowardly hound! You come here
expressly to pick a quarrel, and now you want
to back out of it," Talbot said, in contempt.

Dandy Jim—so the miner was called—felt
of the terrible wound in his cheek, from which
the blood was slowly trickling, and suddenly
realized what had happened.

"See hyer, give a man a chance. I kin chaw
you up with a fair show." The giant slowly
rose to his feet. "You put down your w'e-
pons an' I'll put down mine. We kin go outside
an' settle it."

"If you haven't got enough, there's more
where the first come from," Talbot said, sig-
nificantly.

The two gave up their weapons, and, fol-
lowed by the crowd, adjourned to the street out-
side the saloon.

Jimmie had re-entered the room, attracted by
the noise. Her face was pale, and there was
an anxious look upon her features, as she stood
at the window and beheld Talbot in the moon-
light, stripping off his coat, preparing to en-
counter the giant that towered above him.

CHAPTER V.

THE FACE IN THE WINDOW.

THERE was a dry spot of ground, some thirty
feet square, in front of the Eldorado, which
had not been cut up into ruts by the wagon-
wheels.

The bright rays of the full moon shining down
upon it, made it as light as day.

All in the saloon had gathered in a circle in
front of it. Within the circle stood the two
gladiators, completing their preparations for
the contest.

The man from Red-Dog was soon ready; he
dashed his old hat upon the ground, rolled up
the torn sleeves of his red shirt, displaying his
brawny arms, that, like his face, were tanned
to the color of leather by the hot sun in the
mountain gulches. His left cheek was swollen
terribly, where Talbot's knuckles had left their
mark.

The giant was not a handsome man, at
any time, and the ugly wound did not improve
his looks. The proof he had already received
of Talbot's prowess had opened his eyes to the
extent of the task he had undertaken in con-
fronting Injun Dick, and he was not disposed
to underrate his antagonist.

Slowly, Talbot prepared for the encounter.
He cast aside the neat black coat and hat; rolled
up the sleeves of his ruffled white shirt—he
wore no vest—as carelessly as though he was
going to wash his hands, instead of facing a
bully, almost twice his size.

As Talbot bared his arms to the shoulder—
the arms that were white and fair as those of
a beautiful woman—the giant saw the firm
play of the steel-like muscles, that stood out
like bunches of knotted wire under the smooth,
silk-like skin. If the shirt had been stripped
from the back of Injun Dick, the sight of the
body of his foe would have still further aston-
ished "The man from Red-Dog." He would
have seen that Talbot was all bone and muscle,
not an ounce of useless fat upon the wiry, sin-
ewy form. The breadth of the shoulders and
the knotted muscles that lay there beneath the
silken skin, would have told whence came the
strength that sent forth Injun Dick's sledge-
hammer blows.

"Look hyer! don't be all night," growled the
miner, who began to have a nervous desire to
see the thing through.

"Got any friends to carry yer home, Go-
liath?" asked Ginger Bill, with a grin; thus po-
litely intimating that the Red-Dogite would
be unable to walk after the affair was set-
tled.

A chuckle went round the motley crowd at
the humor of the stage-driver. Besides, the
sympathy of the bystanders was almost entire-
ly on the side of the smaller man.

After rolling up his sleeves, Talbot took his
handkerchief from his pocket and tied it around
his waist. As he tightened the knot of the
handkerchief, he happened to glance toward
the house. There was a little opening in the
crowd, so his view was not obstructed. He
saw the pale and anxious face of Jimmie pressed
against the window-pane.

A quiet smile of confidence was on Talbot's
features, and a bright light shone in his dark
eyes as he glanced at the girl's face. Then,
some strange, subtle instinct caused him to
look upward. Why, he could not tell; but a
sight met his eyes that made the blood run cold
in his veins. Bernice, the "heart-woman,"
had been attracted by the noise under her
window, and was looking out upon the crowd.

As Bernice's eyes rested upon Talbot's face,
a strange expression came over her features.
Fixed and rigid as a statue, her soul staring
through her great blue eyes, she looked upon
the scene below.

A single glance Talbot gave. He saw that
she had seen the face, that in the saloon, he
had succeeded in hiding from her.

A stifled groan came from his lips; he raised
his hands to his throat as though he was chok-
ing; then rocked for a second unsteadily on his
feet and then, with a deep groan of anguish,
fell forward on his face senseless. The groan
was answered by a stifled gasp of anguish from

Bernice's lips; yet still, with a face pale with agony, she pressed her temples against the window-pane.

The rough crowd had not noticed the glance of Injun Dick directed at the window; had not heard the sigh of anguish that had been wrung from Bernice's overwrought heart.

At Talbot's sudden, and to them astonishing, faint, they had gathered eagerly around him.

"Somethin' bust!" cried Bill, sagely, kneeling by the side of the prostrate man, and extending his arms as if to raise him from the ground. But, before the stage-driver could carry out his intentions, Jinnie burst impetuously through the crowd, pushing the miners right and left in her hurry.

With a quick, energetic motion, like a tiger mother springing forward in defense of her young, Jinnie pushed Bill away. Losing his balance, the stage driver sprawled over on the flat of his back, like a gigantic frog.

The girl raised the head of the fallen man from the ground and supported it on her knee. With pale features, lips tightly compressed, and eyes shooting lurid fire, Jinnie looked into Talbot's face. She fore open the band of the shirt that seemed to compress the swollen neck.

"Get me some whisky, quick, some of you!" she cried. The crowd had discreetly fallen back a little after the girl's appearance. There was something terrible in her grief that impressed even the rude miners with awe.

Two or three of the crowd ran into the saloon after the whisky.

Jinnie bent over the pale face; her long hair had escaped from the knot that usually held it in place and came down like a red screen around the shapely head of Talbot. Concealed by the tangled mass of hair that half hid her action from the gaze of the wondering crowd, Jinnie kissed the pale lips of the senseless man with a dozen or more eager, burning kisses, as though she thought the fire of her lips would woo him back to life.

She thought not of those that stood around her; she would have done the same had all the world witnessed the action.

The color came back to the pale lips; the passionate kisses had accomplished their object; Talbot was reviving.

The girl raised her fearless eyes—there was too much fire in her soul for tears—joyfully to heaven. Her eyes rested on the pale face of Bernice, pressed against the glass. Had not Bernice been clad in her night-dress, robed for rest, she too would have sprung as eagerly as the other to the assistance of the fallen man.

With the quick instinct of woman, Bernice had guessed what had taken place, when the red-gold hair of Jinnie had swept, screen-like, around the face of Talbot. She could hear eager kisses wooing life into the cold lips, though they reached no other ears. That little minute was an hour of torture to the soul of Bernice.

The eyes of the two girls met. A single glance; but a glance of hatred met and returned.

"She loves him too!" Four unspoken words, flashing through two brains at the same moment: from that moment Bernice Gwynne, the woman who seeks, and Jinnie, the girl who runs the Eldorado saloon, knew that they were bitter enemies.

With a roar and a howl, the three miners rushed from the saloon with a bottle of whisky, to which the Heathen Chinese, Ah Ling, clung with the courage of desperation.

"Melican man, no have—payee, allee same!" he screamed, in remonstrance.

When the three rough fellows had rushed into the saloon and seized the first bottle that came handy and prepared to depart with it, the faithful "Chinese" had battled manfully with the thieves, as he supposed the intruders to be, as they hadn't tendered payment for the whisky or given any explanation.

"All right, Heathen," said Jinnie, taking the liquor. There was a strange, unnatural tone in the girl's voice. A forced calmness that seemed to tell of a raging fire within; something like the thin crust that covers the volcano's flame.

The Chinaman retreated into the saloon again, smiling blandly.

Jinnie poured the whisky into the hollow of her hand and dashed it upon the head that lay on her knee.

The smell of the potent spirits finished what the kisses of the girl had begun. Strange medicines, the pure and dewy lips of the girl and the fiery incense of the soul-destroying liquor.

Slowly Talbot opened his eyes and looked around him, with a wondering gaze.

"Be a man, Dick," murmured Jinnie, reproachfully, in his ear. "You have fainted like a girl."

"You don't know the cause," he answered, a shiver shaking his form as though icy fingers had touched him.

"Yes, I do!" Jinnie exclaimed. "I am not blind, Dick; it is this woman—this stranger from the East."

There was just a little touch of reproach in the girl's voice.

"Come now, git on your pegs!" cried the red-shirted man, who began to bluster again, thinking from Talbot's sudden illness that he had an easy job before him. "Stand up an' take your gruel like a man. I kin hug a bar to death, I kin. I'm the cavortin' grizzly from Red Dog, who-oo-op!"

"Say, Dick, lemme peel the hide off this ring-tailed mule!" cried Ginger Bill, who had risen to his feet after being pushed over by Jinnie's impetuous rush, and stood quietly by, looking on.

"No, no," replied Talbot, rising to his feet, his strength having apparently all returned to him. "I ask no man to fight my battles. This fellow wants a lesson; he shall have one. Jinnie, go in; this is no place for you; but, even as he spoke in a chiding tone, he pressed the brown hand of the girl within his own, softly.

The pressure brought the quick, tall-tale blood to the cheeks and forehead of the girl; her eyes, too, flashed with a joyous light.

Without a word, she quitted his side, and went toward the saloon.

A single glance she gave at the pale face that still was pressed against the window-glass above. Upon her features was a look of defiance—of triumph. Bernice answered it with a scornful, contemptuous glance.

Rivals for one man's love were now those two girls, who, but an hour before, had never seen each other.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO LOVES FOR ONE HEART.

A DEEP silence reigned among the rough crowd as Talbot stepped forward and confronted the giant.

The contrast between the two was great; not that there was such a difference between them in size, for, now that the miner had doffed his high-crowned hat, and bared his arms, he did not appear to be a great deal larger in frame than his opponent—only tall-

er. His arms were larger, but the bulk came upon her temple. Dreamily she closed her eyes and nestled still closer to the man by whose side she stood.

"And now, Jinnie, what is the question that you wish me to answer?" he asked, softly.

"Have you ever seen this woman before?" and the eyes unclosed and fixed themselves with an eager gaze upon his face as she asked the question.

Talbot's face grew rigid as marble as the question fell upon his ears; yet, in the face, the eager, searching eyes, the girl read neither yes or no.

"What makes you ask such a question?" he said, as if wishing to evade a direct reply.

"Dick, you are not answering me!" the girl exclaimed, reproachfully. "What can it matter to you the motive I have for asking? You promised me that you would answer. Will you keep that promise?"

"Yes," he replied, after a moment's hesitation, and in that moment he gazed into the face of the girl as though he expected to read something within there.

"You will answer?" she exclaimed, quickly. "Yes; I have never seen this woman before," he said, slowly and firmly.

"Then she is not your wife?" Jinnie cried, a touch of joy in her voice.

"My wife?" Talbot said, in astonishment, "why, what put such an idea as that into your head?"

"I do not know," Jinnie replied; "the thought came to me. You are from the East, so is she. I thought, perhaps, that she was your wife before you came here, and that she had now come after you."

"Your thought was wrong, Jinnie; I have never been married."

"And you don't love this woman?" the girl asked, anxiously.

"Why should I love a woman that I never saw before?"

A long breath of relief came from the girl's lips at the reply; a terrible load had been taken off her heart.

"And now, Jinnie, good-night; I must be off," he continued.

"Where are you going to-night?"

"To Jim Blood's room, down the street. Jim is up in Austen, and I shall take possession of his shanty until he comes back. I've got the key. So, good-night, once more."

He kissed the low forehead, and then walked carelessly down the street. Jinnie watched him until he entered a little shanty, some hundred paces on; then she entered the saloon.

Hardly had the girl disappeared, when a dark shadow, that had been concealed behind one of the houses opposite, came from its hiding-place, and stole cautiously down the street to the shanty where Talbot had said he would pass the night.

The spy crossed the street and peered in through the window of Injun Dick's retreat. From the shanty came the feeble gleams of a candle's light.

When the light was extinguished, the spy whistled, softly. Forth from the darkness came five other figures, who joined the first. They were all dressed alike, in long, black gowns, and their heads were covered with black hoods.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

The Dumb Page:

OR, THE DOG'S DAUGHTER.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "THE IRISH CAIDEN," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE ROOK RIDER," "THE SEA CAT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

PULSING WAVELETS.

DON LORENZO BELLARIO and Estella, Countess Milleroni, were seated side by side in a gondola, floating over the still waters of the lagoon. They were alone, save for a single gondolier in the bow, whose back was discreetly turned, as he plied his oar.

Don Lorenzo was half seated, half reclining on his elbow, as he looked up in Estella's face, with the peculiar magnetic glance of his eyes that was so effective with the female sex.

The countess had her eyes cast over the lagoon, glowing in the rays of the afternoon sun; but the flickering blush on her cheek told that she was quite sensible of the glance.

She turned her eyes on the Spaniard presently, and blushed deeper than ever as she said:

"Don't look at me so. You frighten and disturb me."

He smiled with his own peculiar grace, with a look of ardent passion and triumph in his eyes, that made her lower her own.

"Frighten you?" he half whispered; "I would not do that with my good will. Disturb you? Not me, Estella, but your own heart, which is kinder to poor Lorenzo than its mistress would have it."

The countess erected her head with a haughty gesture.

"Its mistress can take care of it, my lord; Don Lorenzo has said the same things to scores of ladies as this, I doubt not."

A glance of anger shot from his eyes, and he clenched one hand as it lay beside him. Lorenzo had never met with such resistance before. For six long months he had laid siege to the countess, and he could count on nothing certain as yet.

"Estella," he said, in a tone of injury, "you are not kind nor just. Well do you know that since I first knew you, no other woman has claimed my vows."

"No other, Lorenzo?" and she turned her clear hazel eyes on his with a searching glance; "have you forgotten my cousin, Julia?"

"You know I never see her now," Bellario answered, hastily.

"You say true; poor Julia has changed wonderfully now. She is indeed ready to take the veil."

Don Lorenzo smiled covertly, as the countess turned away her head. He knew the secret of the religious fervor of the Doge's daughter. Annetta took her place, and played her part well, from their wonderful likeness to each other, while the counterfeit page enjoyed her liberty with all the zest of the real Julia.

"I can hardly think sometimes that it is the same Julia," pursued the countess. "She has turned away that sly-looking Father Ambrose with the sore eyes, and has submitted herself to Father Francis, stern as he is. She seems to have changed wonderfully."

Don Lorenzo yawned with an air of indifference.

"Heaven speed her conversion!" he exclaimed, pliously. "Would that I could clear my own conscience from the sin of having, for a moment, disturbed her thoughts from the other world. Ah, Madonna Estella, how shall I ever atone to you for all my wild and wicked life? You will never know what it is to love

hopelessly, as I have done, so long. And it made me so wicked, only to divert my thoughts from her I adored, wildly and uselessly, then."

He spoke so sadly and sweetly, looked so handsome and so wretched, that involuntarily the countess put one hand on his glossy curls, and smoothed them with a gentle, pitying touch.

"Ah! Lorenzo!" she said, softly, "if I could but believe you!"

"Believe me!" he murmured, pressing his lips to her hand. "Look into my eyes, and they doubt me if you can."

She looked, and turned away with a deep blush, and then gazed out intently over the water, while he murmured words of glowing love, such as he knew so well how to use.

Estella was yielding slowly to the spell she had resisted for so long, from some hidden motive, that even Lorenzo could not fathom.

Presently, as they floated quietly over the still lagoon, in the shimmering golden haze of afternoon, Bellario, with the tact of a master in the art, added the sweets of music to the enchantment of the scene, as the countess sat dreamily gazing seaward, her hand passively lying in his clasp.

Gently touching the lute that lay beside him, he sung, as softly as possible:

THE GONDOLA SONG.
Pulsing wavelets, softly lipping, kiss the gently-gliding keel;

Whispering breezes lift the silken curtains canopying beside;

Seabirds, floating in the sunshine, over water blue as steel.

Circle in the heavens, watching dolphins leap above the tide.

Whispering, murmuring, Moments swiftly fly.

Swift as the cloud-flits, White-pluming the sky.

Over the sleeping sea softly we float, Only young Love is awake in our boat.

He sung so enchantingly, with his sweet tenor voice, and the song was so well adapted to the scene, that Estella insensibly yielded to its influence. Her hand softly stole into his, and she turned her face, with a smile of pleasure that she could not resist, when the plash and roll of oars, close by them, suddenly disturbed the quiet of the sentimental idyl.

While the bow gondolier, who had been nodding half asleep, over his oar, shouted out, as he piled it with desperate energy:

"Take care there! Do you want to run over us?"

The countess started with a shriek, as a great galley came sweeping by them, almost running over them in its course, which was only altered just in time to graze the stern of their gondola.

Don Lorenzo leaped to his feet, and beheld the flag of the rival republic of Genoa floating in the stern of the stranger, beside which stood a tall, thin man, with a gray pointed beard and long gray hair, in the scarlet uniform of a captain in the Genoese service.

The Spaniard was within ten feet of the stern of the galley which kept so bad a lookout, and angrily called out to the gray-bearded captain:

"Signor, you are careless, too careless to be a gentleman. Do you understand me, or are you Genoese fools?"

The tall captain called out in answer:

"I understand perfectly, signor. I anchor at the Dugano."

He raised his plumed hat with ceremonious courtesy, and turned away to con his vessel, as she swept on with dash and roll of oars.

The countess was looking after the galley with a strange, wistful look, and when Don Lorenzo turned and sat down, she seemed inattentive to his remarks, and still kept looking after the Genoese.

"Who is that?" she asked at last. "What brings the galleys of Genoa into these waters, Don Lorenzo?"

"It is some matter of business, I suppose," he responded, in an impatient tone. "The flag of Genoa is often seen here, while we are at peace with their republic. It is some little dispute about the coral fishers of the gulf, that demands a captain of the republic to settle it."

"But that officer," she persisted, tremulously. "Did not his voice remind you of any one?"

Bellario started.

"Nay, now you say it, it does," he confessed, thoughtfully. "But, pshaw! the man's dead, or else fled to the Turk. What would he do in the service of Genoa? Besides, this is an old man."

"Then you knew the voice, too?" and she covered her face, with a shudder.

Don Lorenzo looked down with a face of bitter anger and mortification at her. He had been so accustomed to success, with his handsome person and many advantages, that it galled him to the soul to see this woman entirely oblivious of him, at the first sight of something that reminded her of the lover he had driven from Venice.

"Yes, I knew the voice," he declared, bitterly; "it was like the voice of that convicted traitor, Bonetta, whom I punished with my sword at San Antonio."

She started and looked up, in surprise.

"You never told me that."

"No," he said, angrily; "and I am a fool to do it now. But it was this hand that stretched him bleeding in fair fight, for all that. He joined with you to humiliate me, and I took my revenge on him. But you have paid me back since then, by showing every moment that you care more for this banished traitor, with all his crimes, than for the love of him who never sued to woman before, in vain."

His tone was earnest and angry. For the first time, the all-conquering hero was piqued into showing his disappointment.

Estella looked at him, sadly and kindly.

"Ah, Lorenzo," she murmured, "our hearts are not our own always. If you love me truly, it will not be so for long. I feel my heart going toward you even now so strongly, and yet I fear so much to be deceived. As for him, I shall never see him again. A traitor mates not with the blood of the Dandolo. Now take me home. To-morrow I shall be able to speak to you. But now I hardly know what I am doing. My brain whirls."

He made a sign to the gondolier, who turned the boat's head shoreward, and they swept slowly in, past the picturesque dome of the Dugano, with the winged figure pointing seaward from its summit.

As they passed by, there lay the Genoese galley, with its sails furled and its oars stowed, the guards pacing up and down by the gangways. A group of Venetian officers were just taking leave of the captain, and the latter bowed to Don Lorenzo as he passed.

The Spaniard was very silent all the way home, and took leave of the lady at the gate of her palace, when he returned in haste to the Dugano to meet the captain of the galley. He found the boat of the latter awaiting him at the quay, and the first question he asked the officer in charge, was:

"What is your captain's name?"

"Count Bonetta," answered the officer, proudly. "If your name is Bellario, I have orders to take you on board."

Don Lorenzo bowed his head and stepped on board.

"It is he," he muttered.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GALLEY INTERVIEW.

WHEN Don Lorenzo stepped on the deck of the galley, he was surprised by the scrupulous neatness and order of everything on board. The long sweeps lay in rows side by side, with the ropes neatly coiled on top of them. The rowers were all below decks, and the only persons to be seen were the guard of halberdiers, in the scarlet uniform of the Genoese republic.

Don Lorenzo looked with surprise on the lofty figure of the captain. He had expected to meet his old opponent, but this was quite a different man, as far as he could see. The Swiss had been tall and heavily built, with a grave, quiet, good-natured face, and closely-trimmed fair hair and mustache. This man, while fully as tall, was thin to emaciation, with long hair and pointed beard of unmistakable gray, and a fierce, eager expression of countenance, the blue eyes being as keen as sabers.

"Well, signor?" queried the captain, haughtily. "What do you wish with me?"

Don Lorenzo still eyed him, doubtfully, and asked, with more politeness than he had ever shown a foe:

"May I ask your name, Signor Captain?"

"Antonio, Count Bonetta," said the other, as haughtily as before; "not the man you seek, signor, perhaps. That man died on the deck of the caravel that bore him from Venice. He had an uncle in the service of Genoa, and to him he committed the task to clear his memory from the lying accusations of one Lorenzo Bellario, in the city of Venice. I am come for that purpose, signor, with the credentials of St. George of Genoa at my back. They have gone to the Doge this day, and the memory of Antonio Bonetta is to be cleared by a fair trial in open day from the snares of the villain Bellario. Perhaps you know him, signor?"

He broke off with the sneering question, fixing his eyes on the Spaniard's, with ineffable insolence.

Don Lorenzo drew himself up haughtily.

"I am Bellario, Signor Count," he said; "and no man ever lived over twenty-four hours who called me by the name of villain. Make your will, signor, for by sunset the sands of San Antonio shall be red with the blood of a second Bonetta."

The count bowed with ironical courtesy.

"The second Bonetta will endeavor to avenge the first. I came to Venice to seek you."

"I am easily found," retorted Bellario, haughtily. "Your will not be the first Swiss cock's comb I have cut."

"Boast not thyself too loudly," suggested the count; "we have no Lion's Mouth in Genoa, for traitors to put lying accusations therein, in the dark, as thou didst, to take away the fame of an honest soldier."

Don Lorenzo regarded the other for the first time with anger, mingled with astonishment.

"Swiss count?" he said, fiercely. "Lorenzo Bellario has done many a bad deed; but the man that says he ever did a cowardly one, lies like a coward. I whipped your fine nephew from Venice with my good sword, and he fled to avoid my sight, for I took his lady from him. What need had I to plot against the hound? For my own misdeeds I take all blame, but that I had no share in. When will you meet me, signor? It is not the custom of a Spanish grandee to bandy lies with a Swiss bravo."

"Go, get your friends quickly," answered the count, grimly; "when I see your boat pass me, my own will be in the water. Then lead on where you will."

"It is well," and the Spaniard bowed as he retired; "and if you take the advice of Don Lorenzo Bellario, Signor Count, you will leave instructions for your successor for never yet found I the man that could cross swords with me, save only Cola Botarnia, of Florence."

The count bowed ceremoniously in reply.

"I will bear your recommendation in

how my father was doing, and if he suspected any thing, I had access to her as the page, and lo! my lady had suddenly changed. She pretended not to know who I was, and called me "Annetta."

"Ha!" said Don Lorenzo, with a laugh; "I thought it would come to that. You would play with edged tools. Annetta has proved that she would not always be the fool you took her for. She knows you dare not expose her for fear of your own reputation. The convent or the grave would expiate the disgrace to Dandolo."

"What do you mean, signor?" she demanded, pale as ashes, and her eyes glittering ominously; "never has your hand touched mine save in courtesy; and I am now as pure as the day I first saw you. Dare you say otherwise?"

Her little teeth were clenched, and her hand closed on the poisoned dagger as she spoke, with the glare of an angry tigress in her eyes.

"Who will believe you?" said Don Lorenzo, with a faint sneer. "All the household know you as Annetta, the dumb page. You have acted your part well—ay, so well that they all think you what she was. And who shall gain say them? Not I, my lady. We have lived with each other too long, and been alone too often. You have made me feel your power ever since you set yourself to torment me. Now you know what it is to be in the power of another. Good!"

And he clapped his hands. Julia looked dangerously at him, but controlled her passionate nature.

"Hear me out," she said, calmly; "I had not finished. After a while she relented so far as to tell me this secret, for she is a fool after all, this Annetta. She loves religion and wants to go into a convent, and that's the reason she does not wish to come back to doublet and hose. She hates you for your cruelty to her, and hopes for revenge. Ay, you may start. But she told me more than that. She told me how my father, thinking her to be me, told her how in former times he had a natural daughter, the child of a fisherman's wife, who was seven years older than I, and whom he had lost sight of. And then, by questioning him, she found that it was her own self, and then the idea entered into her head to personate me forever, and thrust me down to her level."

"Therefore she told my father her own story, as of another, and how you stole away the fisherman's child to break her heart, and the old Doge swore an oath of vengeance against you, and to reclaim his daughter from her base position. Now, Don Lorenzo, who is in her power? Signor, she has fooled the papers!"

Don Lorenzo started back, as white as ashes. "Heaven and earth!" he exclaimed; "you have betrayed me, devil that you are! And you pretended to love me!"

He sunk into a chair, shaking all over. The audacious duelist covered down under some mysterious terror. The girl came close to him and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Nay, there at least you are wrong, Lorenzo," she said, sadly; "I have done much to torment you, but I have helped you to your revenge, not betrayed you. God help me! I love you. I hate those whom you hate, and I have destroyed them. But I had the papers hidden away in my own room, and she had found them."

"And where are they now?" he asked, eagerly. "Strange girl, something in your face tells me that the danger is averted."

Julia looked at him, fixedly. "God help me! It is," she said; "the papers are safe."

"Then what danger is afoot?" he asked, wondering.

"That the Doge will send for his daughter before the dawn of to-morrow," said Julia, solemnly; "and she will not be here."

"Where will she be?" asked he, wondering.

"In the palace of the Dandolo," answered the girl; "where she once lived happy, as the pure only can be."

"Julia! Julia!" he cried, suddenly catching her in his arms; "witch or fairy, devil or angel, you shall not leave me. With all thy tortments, I love thee better than ten thousand Annettas, and I will not have her back. Do you hear?"

Contrary to her usual wild pranks, the girl lay still in his arms, looking up in his face with a certain sad, far-away look in her blue eyes.

"Julia, my love, my life!" cried Don Lorenzo, ardently; "what meanest thou? Why wilt thou leave me? I will not have Annetta back for thee."

"Lorenzo," and she spoke solemnly; "Annetta will never come back."

"What?" he demanded, releasing her in his astonishment.

"Annetta is dead!" replied Julia.

Then there was a short, horrified pause. Even Don Lorenzo, hardened as he was, shuddered at the news.

"How did she die?" he at length demanded.

For all answer Julia drew from her bosom a packet of papers which she showed him, and pointed to a dark stain on the blade of her tiny dagger.

"I could not let any one keep those but me," she explained, with a strange attempt at a smile. "Sometimes—God help me—I think I must be possessed of the Evil One, to torture what I love. And yet I cannot help it. Lorenzo, it is our last day together. To-morrow you must be far from Venice. In no other way can this crime be hidden. I did it to save you. Annetta must never be found, and I must be the Doge's daughter once more."

"If you will go with me, I go," he answered, obstinately. "Let nothing part us now. I swear I will not stir without you, for I love you."

At this moment the great bell of St. Mark's tolled out five, and Don Lorenzo started.

"The very hour!" he said, hurriedly snatching up cap and rapier; "I shall be too late, and the cursed Swiss will have a right to taunt me for it."

"What is it? A duel? Another?" cried the girl, agitated.

"Ay, Julia," he answered, rapidly girding himself; "with Bonetta's uncle, and I have no second. How shall I find one in time!"

"Take me!" cried the girl, tossing her curls back; "it is our last day, and I will play the page for once to my heart's content. Come, Lorenzo."

He strained her to his breast, and rained kisses on her brow and lips.

"My queen!" he ejaculated; "now by all the stars of heaven, there is none like thee, and I love thee more than all the world beside. We will go."

Cavalier and page passed forth to the rendezvous for the duel with Count Bonetta.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 260.)

We do not judge men by what they are in themselves, but by what they are relatively to us.—Madame Swetchine.

SCIENCE.

BY J. H. H.

What is Science—good or evil?
Bane or blessing to mankind?
Fraught with doctrines of the devil,
Or divine truths for the mind?

Does it elevate man's nature,
Teaching him his God to see
In each planet, in each creature,
Shewing His sublimity?

O, makes it man atheistic,
Disbelieving God-like truth,
Holding revelation mystic,
Perfuming the mind of youth?

When man studies science solely,
With naught else to guide the mind,
Then it steps to scorn the holy,
Then debases human kind.

When Religion lends assistance,
And when Reason is its guide,
Then flies evil to a distance,
Hereby is then defied.

Then can man read God in nature,
In his works His grandeur find,
See how the minutest creature
Has in wisdom been designed.

False Faces:

OR,

THE MAN WITHOUT A NAME.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "A LIVING LIE," "SHARED TO DEATH," "BERNAL CLYDE," "ELMA'S CAPTIVITY," "STELLA, A STAR."

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN A QUANDARY.

It was well into the morning before Kate Vehlslage awoke from the lethargic slumber into which she had been thrown; and as Peter Shaw slept late there was no one to disturb her.

Great was her surprise to find herself alone, for she was an early riser and had been accustomed to arise first and attend to the duties of their small household.

It was as much as she could do to keep her eyes open, and her head felt dull and heavy.

"What's the matter with me, I wonder?" she asked herself, in a bewildered kind of way. "I never felt like this before. Etta's up before me—why it must be late. Etta! Etta!" she called.

There was no answer. She scrambled out of bed and looked into the other apartment.

"Why, she isn't here!" she cried, surprised. "She's gone out—and the fire isn't built—no signs of breakfast, for the table isn't set. What time is it? Nine o'clock! Good gracious! Whatever made me sleep so? And the sleep hasn't done me any good either! Yaw! I feel as if I could go right to bed again. It's a wonder Mr. Shaw hasn't been for his breakfast before now. Etta must be in his room. Well, I'll just hurry up the breakfast."

She dressed herself in all haste, kindled a fire in the stove, and put on the kettle to boil. Then she went to the door that led from one set of rooms to the other and knocked.

Her first knock being unheeded she repeated it loudly.

"Etta!" came the voice of Peter Shaw, like one who had been suddenly aroused from a sound slumber.

"Why he can't be up yet!" exclaimed Kate, in perplexity. "Ain't you up, sir?" she asked him.

"Not yet."

"Why it's after nine o'clock!"

"Is it? Ah! I was up late last night. I'll be ready for breakfast in a quarter of an hour."

"Very well, sir."

Kate re-entered the room which combined the offices of kitchen, sitting-room and living-room generally, and began to set the table for breakfast, but she did this with a languid movement, in strong contrast with her usual briskness. Her limbs felt rigid and her brain was clouded. This strange feeling perplexed her.

"What's come over me?" she muttered to herself, in bewilderment. "I don't feel a bit good. And where's Etta? Where's she gone? I never knew her to go out in that way without saying anything before."

Here she knocked a cup off the table, with her elbow, and broke it.

"Drat it! there I go!" she exclaimed, irritably. "Oh! what's the matter? My head feels as heavy as lead. I do wish Etta would come! Wherever can she have gone? Well, we can wait for her. I'll run out and get the bread and milk, and some eggs. Perhaps she'll be back by the time I am."

Cheered somewhat by this reflection, she took her basket and went out.

When she returned she found Peter Shaw seated in her room. He had not put on his disguise, as he only used that when he went abroad. He looked very pleasantly at her, and seemed in a contented frame of mind.

"I bought the morning paper for you," she said, taking it from the basket and giving it to him.

"Thank you," he replied; and began to unfold it.

Kate took off her hat and shawl, and bustled herself in preparing breakfast.

"Where's Etta?" asked Peter Shaw.

"Hasn't she come in?" returned Kate.

"No. I thought she went out with you."

"No, she didn't. I can't imagine where she's gone."

Peter Shaw lowered his paper uneasily.

"Didn't she say where she was going?" he inquired.

"No; here's your coffee, sir, and I boiled you some eggs."

"Very good." Peter Shaw moved his chair up to the table, but he did not appear to have any appetite for breakfast. "Did Etta ever go out so before?" he asked.

"Never. I don't know what to make of it. I don't know where she's gone, and don't know when she went."

Peter Shaw stared at this.

"Why, did you not see her go?" he cried.

"No; she went before I was up."

"Before you were up?"

"Yes; I overslept myself this morning, and when I woke up she was gone."

"Was anything the matter with you last night? Did you take any landanum or paregoric last night?"

"Lord no, sir! What made you think that?"

"I thought I smelt either one or the other of those drugs as I came through that little room."

"We've never had anything of the sort in the house."

Peter Shaw stirred his coffee absently.

"Do you think she has gone out to visit a neighbor?" he began again.

"Not she, sir. She never has anything to say to the neighbors. She keeps herself to herself, and always did."

"It's very strange!" He opened an egg abstractedly. "I ought to have been at the of-

fice before now; they are both waiting for me there, but I don't like the idea of going while Etta is absent. Something may have happened to her."

"But what can have happened to her?" cried Kate, nervously.

"I don't know," he answered, absently.

"Ossian had a presentiment of evil—I did not think much of it then; if it had been Almira now I might have done so, knowing how keen-witted she is."

He was talking to himself now, and Kate listened to him amazedly. "Could they have known that she was here and spirited her away?"

He started excitedly to his feet, crying:

"My child, my child, my darling one! am I to lose you so soon after finding you?"

"Good Lord! is he going crazy?" muttered Kate, apprehensively.

He caught the muttered words.

"No; my good girl," he answered, "though I have been so, and suffered tortures almost unendurable; but my brain is steadier now than it has been for years. We must find out where Etta has gone, and speedily!"

"I'll go with you!" cried Kate.

She darted to a chair and seized a shawl, hastily wrapping it over her shoulders.

"Oh, my!" she shrieked.

"What's the matter?"

"This isn't my shawl—it's Etta's. And there's her hat hanging in its usual place. Why she hasn't gone out at all; she must be hiding somewhere to frighten us."

Kate dashed into the little room. But she was back in a moment, with something clutched in her hand.

"She isn't there!" she cried. "But look here! I picked it up on the floor. It don't belong to either of us. I'll take my oath of that—so how came it there?"

Peter Shaw took a small sponge from her hand. It exhaled a sickly odor—he knew it well.

"Great heavens! Chloroform!" he gasped.

"There's villainy here!"

At this moment there came a knock at the door.

"Oh! there she is!" cried Kate, never stopping to think that Etta would enter without knocking.

She darted eagerly to the door and threw it open. Two men appeared there.

"Does Mr. Shaw live here?" inquired one.

"Come in, Chester!" cried Peter Shaw; "I am here."

Chester Starke and Frank Ray entered the apartment, and Kate closed the door, surveying the new-comers curiously.

"You have come in good time," continued Peter Shaw. "But how does it happen that you did come?"

"You promised to be at the office at nine o'clock," replied Chester Starke; "and as you did not come, knowing how punctual you generally are, I was fearful that something might have happened."

"Something has happened—something very serious. My daughter—"

Frank Ray pointed to Kate.

"Oh! she can be trusted—she is Etta's friend. This is Kate—Kate Vehlslage. Kate, these are Chester Starke and Mr. Ray."

Kate made her best curtsy in acknowledgment of the introduction.

"Oh! what splendid young men!" she thought, all in a flutter. "And he didn't say anything about this other one. I'd rather have him than the Ossian—what's his name?"

Chester only glanced at Kate; he had expected to see the golden-haired daughter. Indeed his visit had been cunningly contrived, Shaw's want of punctuality furnishing the excuse, to be presented to Etta a little in advance of Shaw's intention. He was proportionally disappointed at not finding her there.

"What of Miss Etta?" he demanded, eagerly.

"I fear she is in the power of these villains."

"Great Heaven! but how can that possibly be?"

Peter Shaw held the sponge toward Frank Ray, who took a sniff at it, asking: "Do you know what that means?"

"Chloroform—that's the dodge!" replied Ray, at once. He turned to Kate, saying: "How did your head feel when you woke up this morning?"

"Awful!" responded Kate.

Ray nodded his head to Peter Shaw.

"Dosed them both so they wouldn't wake up," he continued. "This is some of Doctor Watervliet's work."

"I think so," rejoined Peter Shaw. "But at what hour was he spirited away? It could not have been while we were on the watch?"

"No."

"It must have been after I came home."

Frank Ray shook his head at this.

"I think not," he answered. "Remember we saw the band leave their rendezvous; and recollect the words we overheard. They had no particular meaning to us then, but they have now in the light of your daughter's disappearance."

"You are right."

"Oh! you are Etta's father, and I didn't know it!" cried Kate; "and she didn't know it either!"

"I think she had a strong suspicion of it," rejoined Peter Shaw.

"She never told me so!"

"Miss Etta is discreet evidently," said Frank Ray. "It appears to run in the family."

"That's as much as to say I'm not," muttered Kate, looking askance at the handsome detective, as he appeared in his own person on this occasion, not being then in pursuit of any one.

"I think I like the other one the best."

"You think then that Etta had been abducted by these men when they passed us last night?" inquired Peter Shaw.

"Such is my idea, sir. What else could the words of this man Skelmersdale, that the game was in his hands, imply?"

"I think you are right; but then how did they take her from the house? That I cannot understand."

"She was never taken out by the door," answered Frank Ray.

"How then?"

"How did you come into this room?"

Peter Shaw glanced at the fireplace in a bewildered manner.

"Why, you don't think they took her up the chimney?" he cried.

Frank Ray smiled at this question.

"Oh, no, hardly that," he replied. "I meant they may have come from the roof of their house to this. Isn't there a way up to the roof?" he asked Kate.

"Of course," she answered. "The people in the front rooms hang their clothes up there when they wash. There's steps leading up, and a scuttle-door."

"Is that door fastened at night?"

"I don't know; 'pears to me it ought to be, though. We in the back rooms have nothing to do with it, as we have our pulley-lines, from the windows across to the wall of that house—but somebody ought to fasten that scuttle every night, I think."

"But nobody does," returned Frank Ray,

with a smile. "What is everybody's business is nobody's business. That's the way they came, sir," he continued, again addressing himself to Peter Shaw. "They came through the roof, down the stairs, picked the lock of this door—they could easily do that with a skeleton key—chloroformed the girls and carried Etta away in an insensible condition."

Peter Shaw was impressed by the force of this reasoning.

"I think you have made a shrewd guess at the truth," he rejoined. "One thing, however, puzzles me, how did they discover that Etta was my daughter? They must have done so, or they would not have troubled her?"

"Evidently."

"Do you think they knew of my escape, or that I was residing here?"

Frank Ray shook his head in the most positive manner.

"Decidedly not!" he replied. "If they had, it would have been you who would have been missing instead of Etta. They could have chloroformed you just as well while they were about it; and I think it's lucky for you that you were not in your room while the abduction was in operation."

"Why so? I might have prevented it!" cried Peter Shaw, with kindling eyes.

Frank Ray shook his head again.

"You would have found the odds too heavy against you, and the attempt would have cost you your life. But, as you say, how they contrived to discover Etta's relationship to yourself is a mystery. I confess that it baffles my penetration. They must have got the information some way."

"Oh! that's what that chap was after?" exclaimed Kate, suddenly.

"What chap?" they all cried, in an eager chorus.

Kate described her interview with the pretended sewing-machine agent.

"Hal! what was he like?" questioned Peter Shaw.

Kate described him.

"It was the lawyer—Skelmersdale's villainous tool! Did he make any inquiries about me?"

"No."

"He did not ask who occupied the front apartments?"

"No; never said a word about them."

"Strange! It is evident that they are yet ignorant of my escape."

"It looks decidedly like it," affirmed Frank Ray.

"I cannot understand, then, how Etta's identity was revealed to them."

"Oh! that fellow has been prowling around this neighborhood before," cried Kate.

"Ah! you have seen him before?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"The first night you came here."

Kate proceeded to relate her singular adventure with the man with the false face.

"It is very plain that this is the lawyer, Cebra Selkreg, and establishes his connection with this band of villains beyond a doubt."

"I think so," added Chester, who had listened attentively to this discussion.

"And so do I," said Peter Shaw. "But the motive for Etta's abduction is by no means plain."

"Can make it so," rejoined Frank Ray.

"You dead, your son missing, supposed to be dead also, Etta would be your sole heiress. They mean to coerce her into a surrender of the property."

"Ha! you are right!" cried Peter Shaw, with conviction. "Do you think they hold her prisoner in that house?"

"Yes, they can scarcely have had time to remove her as yet."

"Then we will go at once to her rescue. Wait until I get my hat and revolver."

"Had we not better wait until night, and secure the whole gang?" suggested Frank Ray.

"No, no, my anxiety will not permit me to do that. There's no knowing what might happen to Etta between now and nightfall. She must not

ONE HEART.

BY LETTIE A. IRONS.

Alone in my room, I hear
The sounds of mirth from below;
And I know that to night I must stand by her side,
Hear her speak the words that will make her his
bride.

And give no sign of my woe.
Once I had hoped to be his—
Oh, God! that the hopes should be dead!
I had dreamed to stand where she stands to-night,
With a heart that was happy and free and light—
Ah! bitter the tears that I shed.

My hope is forever past;
I watched it wither and die,
My life is shorn of its brightness and joy,
Yet still I must smile, and my future life
Must be but a living lie.

My heart, like the alce plant,
Has blossomed in perfect flower,
It will live through the dreary years to come,
Till the life is o'er and its life is done,
But it never will blossom more.

The Terrible Truth:
OR,
THE THORNHURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE
WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CO-
RAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST SHADOW.

THERE was no moon but the stars shone out brightly through the frosty still air. The lights from the mansion had gone out one by one; the gloomy house just without the Thornhurst domain had been wrapped in unbroken slumber for two hours or more. It was close upon midnight, and the whole countryside was brooded over by the silence which the midnight hour should bring.

As silent as the unmoving objects about, as much a part of the dusky night as they, was the dim shape waiting without the closed gate in the high dense hedge. She had waited there an hour, the same patient, silent form. It was the second night she had been at the try-st, and the fear of disappointment for the second time was chilling her heart.

"He will not come," she thought, drawing the dark mantle she wore closer about her. And at the moment her quick ear caught the crackle of the crisp grass under a footstep advancing through the woodland. She stood still, no evidence of eagerness breaking through the composure she had enforced, but for all that there was a force of passion which might almost have astonished the man who was coming, firmly as he believed in her devotion to him.

He was there in a moment, his arm about her, his voice tender as it had been two years before, but in that very first moment of their meeting a vague revelation of the change in him struck her coldly. It may have been the influence of her disappointment before, it may have been that wonderful intuition which is a subtler, truer power in woman than the more occult processes of reasoning are to man.

"Faithful to the trust, my Venetia! I almost doubted finding you here at this late hour, and now you do not seem rejoiced to see me as I hoped you might be. How have I offended, Venetia?"

She had drawn a little away from his circling arm; she had let him kiss her forehead but did not offer her lips.

"I was here to a much later hour last night, Owen. And you have not written to me for months. Is it wonderful that your tardiness and your negligence should link as evidence that you have regretted our hasty step of two years ago?"

"That you should doubt me, Venetia! That I should be called to an account before ever I receive a welcome! Is that your love for me, my own? The trust between us should be so perfect as never to admit doubt, don't you know that?"

There was plaintive reproach in Owen Dare's tone, that indirect shifting of blame from his own shoulders, which had seldom failed in his dealings with womankind before this. Women and dogs are the more faithful the more they are misused, but to make the rule good in either case there must be perfect mastery, and however madly she had loved him, might still love him, Owen Dare never saw one moment of his life that he was this woman's master.

"I know there should be strong foundation for such a trust, Owen. I know we should contribute equally to build up such. But if you have regretted anything of the past I am willing to bury it dead as though it had never been!"

"This my passion-flower! This the warm-hearted, ardent girl who promised me so truly when I saw her last—Venetia, I don't know you in the cold-blooded creature talking in such a style—speaking of burying the past which is not even resurrected to our own knowledge."

"You forget that I number self-command among my other accomplishments, and I have had long months to brood over the probable causes of your silence and apparent forgetfulness of me; and your failure to come to me soon as you were here has not been reassuring."

"My neglect was too faithful exercise of the caution which you yourself were most earnest in urging me to employ. I was fearful of addressing you too often, I trembled with every letter, lest it should fall into wrong hands. And last night, the first at Thornhurst, my absence would have been remarked, possibly suspicion aroused."

"Then you are not changed, Owen? Are you sure, very sure, you have not been won away from me?"

He detected the wistfulness, the willingness to receive his assurance in the perfect faith he had expected from her at the first, and the assurances were not lacking.

"You must promise never to doubt again, Venetia, never even if circumstances should make it appear that you have cause."

"I did not doubt as it was. I never could unless I knew you false, and then—"

"And then, my darling?"

"Only what I said a moment ago. You need never have anything to fear at my hands. If you ever do regret, from that moment you are free as the wind from any claim of mine. I only ask that you shall be honest with me, that you shall never deceive me; that you shall tell me frankly if such a change ever should come."

"And how solemn you grow over it, as if it were the most likely thing in the world! Suppose now that dolorous view you are taking should come about, how long before you would be an avenger upon the track, a Nemesis not to be turned aside? If I could prove so weak as to be false to you, you would hate me as fiercely as you loved me once."

"I never should, Owen—loving once I could never hate. I can imagine no wrong so deep

that I should ever wish to injure you. I would die myself rather than bring harm upon any one I ever loved."

"You never shall be tempted by me, at least, Venetia. How we are wasting the precious moments of this precious interview in discussing a possibility which is not even the remotest possibility in our case. May I light a cigar to ward off this chill, or is my respected father-in-law not supposed to be so soundly sleeping but such sacrilegious odor so near his sanctified ground bears the chance of rousing him?"

"There is no danger."

"Thanks." He struck a light, and the momentary blaze showed Mr. Dare's serene eyes looking upon her with a fond glance that went straight to Venetia's heart. If she had doubted before this in spite of herself she did so no longer now. "See here, love," his tone was very excessively tender as he possessed himself of both her hands, "whatever may come up after this—we are so uncertainly situated there's no telling what might arise, you know—never forget that you are my own loyal wife, for better or worse; never let yourself suppose that I can forget it. I only ask you to believe in me. If you have a misgiving let me prove it false until the time when there can be no chance for misgivings, when I can go to your father and claim you for my own, and show a record not wholly unworthy such a boon. Is it a bargain, my wife?"

"I don't think I would wish to live if I ever could lose trust in you, Owen." How perfect her faith had grown, how beautiful, how dear to her heart just then! A few more minutes flew, Mr. Dare's cigar burnt close under the tip of his handsome nose and he tossed it down, tramping the glowing end out as it gleamed wickedly in the frost-spangled grass.

"I'll come to-morrow night if it's for no more than a moment or so, and again the next, and after that we'll prob. bly be off again. I've formed hope through this connection of mine with the Vivians. It isn't beyond possibility that I may be settled at Thornhurst yet as a permanency."

"And that reminds me—I was almost forgetting—I want you to get me introduced at Thornhurst, Owen. There is no reason why I shouldn't be admitted on equal footing with other young ladies of the neighborhood who visit there. You can bring it about in some way, I am sure."

"It is out of the question," asserted Mr. Dare, a little startled, and quite decided. "What put that notion in your head, my dear? The colonel, you know, has some sort of preposterous prejudice against your father, which also includes you, and even if that objection were out of the way, the liberty would not be permissible to a mere guest as I am at present. I wish I could oblige you, Venetia, but it's not possible, you see."

"Then make it possible! It may be out of the question for you to introduce me there, of course I know that, but you can bring the suit about through some other source. There is your friend, Mr. Vane Vivian, could manage it, or one of the ladies possibly."

"I don't know; it would be a hard matter if done. It couldn't be much advantage as the family stay there so short a time."

"But they come back for the Christmas festivities which may extend for an indefinite period. It was my father's desire first and it is my wish now, because, Owen, it will bring me nearer to you."

It was by no means Mr. Owen Dare's wish. It was the furthest from his wish in fact, though he did not say so in words. He promised a little vaguely to see what he could do; there was a lingering farewell; then the gate closed after her and he strolled away through the cedar grove, looking up at the calm stars through the interstices and reflecting as he went.

"More liberal than I ever thought she could be," his thoughts ran. "And Venetia means every word she says! I'd lay my head to it, if I were to go back on her now, she'd never peach or give a sign." Mr. Dare's punctilious expression was not always held to strict account in his own self-communings. "Not that I mean to do it, of course not, but it was a rash move to entangle myself completely as I did. I don't regret it and I don't expect to. There is Mrs. Sholto Norton Hayes and the eighty thousand I might have had—really I am inclined to return thanks for my deliverance. I don't know that I'd absolutely change matters if I had the power now, but by some means I must bluff Venetia off from her notion about Thornhurst. That wouldn't suit, by any means."

As he made his way toward the mansion rising in black outline against hill and sky, another face rose up in his mind side by side with the dark, beautiful one which had so lately looked trustfully upon him under the starlight—Nora's face as he had covertly watched it that day, pure, fair, and daintily flushed, wide brown eyes sparkling animatedly, and glowing hair massed about the shapely little head. Mr. Dare felt that his choice had been between two types of such opposite loveliness that it was inevitable he should regret the one, having chosen the other, and it made but slight matter, as there was no difference in the scale of their worldly possessions, each being munificently dowered with beauty and nothing else.

Venetia went in silently over the leaf-straw path where the tangled shrubbery brushed her garments on either side, the sweetest peace her proud, torturous life had ever known resting upon her. It was such dark peace to her whose rebellious spirit had stung her often under the wonderful self-command she had gained. With all the world to choose from she would not have asked more of her own free will just then than this happiness of her's openly acknowledged; and all the goods of life seemed so pitiful in comparison!

The warm flush in her cheeks was chilled; a thrill of terror shot to her heart as a dark shadow obscured her way, and in the clear starlight her father's tall form loomed up before her. She did not scream and she did not attempt to fly. She simply stood still and braced herself for the worst of what might come. How long he had been there, how much he might know of her own proceedings, she could not even guess.

"You choose a strange hour for rambling, Venetia," he said, in a metallic tone before which she shrank. "Not strictly a conventional hour if you will permit me to suggest it. Will you take my arm back to the house, Miss Montrose?"

She permitted her hand to be drawn unresistingly through his arm and walked in total silence by his side. He led her in through a dark passage to a small room, where a dim light was burning. He released her hand and waved her to a chair but remained standing himself.

"Sit down, Venetia."

The calm, hard face of the man had not moved a muscle, but there was a cold glitter in those steely eyes which was more terrible to her than a belching battery would have been. She knew she had the worst to dread then, and not the least impressive feature in the anger of

Mr. Walter Montrose was its terrible quietude. One glance of those cold eyes had power to scathe to the very soul; a half-dozen words in that ringing, metallic tone were more potent than the fiercest tornado Colonel Seymour Vivian could utter.

"I must confess surprise at the discovery of your odd taste, lately developed let me hope," he went on. "A chance discovery brought about through fancying I heard the jar of a door some time since, and a reconnaissance disclosed yours on the swing. You must have been in haste to have left it so carelessly. A glance showed me that you were not in your room; the just perceptible odor of a cigar on the air without guided me to the end of the garden walk. I went, doubting, incredulous. I paused, convinced, at the sound of voices, one of which I distinctly recognized as yours. Look a little less sphinx-like, if you can, Venetia. That is an uncomfortable expression your face is wearing, and nothing is more admirable than studious control of the features to the will. Of course I withdrew to a suitable distance immediately. I had no desire to play the spy upon my daughter's actions; I should be most sorry to lose confidence in her to an extent leading to that. I refer to the matter now, Venetia, to recall certain hopes and expectations of my own which I have taken considerable trouble to impress upon your mind. I have had ambitious aims for you, the nearest to see you installed as mistress of Thornhurst. I am not in the habit of being thwarted, as you know; let me suggest it would be policy to disappoint me there through any failure of yours. Also it might perhaps be better if these midnight rambles be dispensed with hereafter, though I leave that entirely to your discretion. Only one thing more: if any fancy of yours should raise an obstacle between yourself and Thornhurst, the obstacle shall be removed. I think I need not detain you longer. Good-night, Miss Venetia Montrose."

He held the door open and she passed through not having uttered one word. She went blindly up the few steps leading to her own chamber, with a feeling of suffocation come upon her, a dumb dread which seemed to paralyze nerve and action. He had overheard enough to suspect the truth, if he did not know it; the emphasis he had placed upon the pronunciation of her name at length showed that, and his relentless determination to trample down any obstacle coming before the fulfillment of his wishes. Heaven's ordinance of marriage is not easily set aside, but a dread terror seized her as she thought what other alternative might remove the obstacle.

How far off now seemed the peace and happiness of the last half hour! how impossible that she should ever feel secure in such again! Venetia Montrose had passed more than one bitterly wakeful night before this; never one so fraught with numb despair.

The question of Miss Montrose's appearance at the mansion had been presented and settled, hours before her own request to Dare. Nora never let grass grow under her feet in pursuing any object of her own, and the narration of their accident was promptly followed by a request for permission to invite the young lady to visit her there.

"Bring the daughter of Walter Montrose here!" vociferated Colonel Vivian. "I'd as soon bring a cobra into the house. Let this settle that question now and forever, Miss Carteret; Montrose's daughter does not set foot within my doors, and you will have nothing to do with her on pain of my bitterest displeasure."

Nora was disappointed keenly, but there was no gainsaying her guardian in that mood—as near an approach to the tempestuous as he often exhibited toward her.

CHAPTER X.

VANE'S FRIEND.

THE metropolitan season opened brilliantly. There was no end of gayeties. There were all the grades of balls, parties, and receptions; there were the operas, the drives on fine days in elegant toilets, the rounds of calls made and calls received, to fill up morning, eve and night, for understand the fashionable world knows no noontime.

It was all very delightful to Nora. She went through the whole course, day in and day out, and never wearied. Mrs. Grahame took her everywhere. The colonel, making a grand figure and nearly as much lionized as a younger man might have been, was very often their escort. Failing him, there was no lack of others. Vane very rarely served in the capacity, and then with supreme unappreciation of the honor that Mrs. Grahame gave decidedly the cold shoulder to the young man and left him undisturbed to his own pursuits. There was a whisper afloat that these same pursuits were not in strictest accordance with the moral code with which society, however hollow at heart, polishes its outer shell. For all that, society was very gracious to Mr. Vane Vivian when he chose to honor its gathering with his presence. But then society has admirably adapted itself to the sort of practice which strains at a gnat and swallows a camel.

Very different in his habits and the spirit displayed was his chosen friend, Owen Dare. It was even a matter of wonder that such a Damon-and-Pythias-like sentiment could exist between such opposite types. Mr. Dare was a most exemplary character. He was also untiring in his devotion, a model escort, and always in faithful attendance upon the movements of the Grahame party. No one was more unconscious than Nora herself of how very marked his attentions had become, and of the rumor which was beginning to link their names with customary freedom.

There was a question mingled, however. Was Dare at his old game again, or was he really going in for a winning hand, as all appearances seemed to denote? They didn't know that the little Carteret came up to his figure, but of course, being Colonel Seymour Vivian's ward, she could not be of small importance. There was a whisper of those diamond mines in Brazil, too. Trust Dare to know what he was about; he was not at all the sort of man to lose his head unawares, and just there rumor made its mistake. He was not the sort of man to lose his head, but, having lost it, he was just the sort of man to stop at no lengths to carry his own object.

"Such a pity their positions couldn't be reversed," said Mrs. Grahame to Nora, after one of Dare's daily visits. He did not confine himself to simple calls; he came at all hours; he dined with the family; he even breakfasted and lunched with them on occasions; he had managed to make himself indispensable to the colonel as he had become to Mrs. Grahame herself. "Cousin of mine though he be, I can't indorse Vane's doings. I shouldn't like to answer for the consequence if the whole story of his misdeeds were to come to the colonel unawares, and that splendid Mr. Dare wards half the blame away from him and keeps the colonel soothed when he's apt to be furious. I repeat, it's the greatest of pities

they are not differently placed. A son and heir of Owen Dare's strict rectitude would be a great comfort to my uncle, while Vane is not likely to prove anything but the opposite."

"Of what frightful things is Mr. Vane Vivian guilty?" asked Nora. "My guardian doesn't see any fault in him, I am very sure. It's nothing but 'Vane' when I am with him, until I fairly weary of the name."

"All my uncle's policy, my dear!" And Mrs. Grahame looked volumes she would not speak, which were Greek to Nora's unsuspecting sight. "As for Vane, he is going the road to ruin fast as any wild young man ever went over it. There isn't an indiscretion in the whole catalogue of which he has not been guilty, so far as I can learn. He is absolutely, criminally reckless in regard to money matters. He has gambled away a fortune in two weeks here, and they say it's nothing to the debts he came loaded with from the continent."

"They say!" Who says, Mrs. Grahame?"

"I believe Owen Dare was obliged to say it. There was no putting the affair off, and the colonel had to be appealed to. He paid the bill, it was an enormous amount, and swore to disinherit Vane before he would settle another one. It occurred the first week after you came here; I wonder you didn't suspect something of a disturbance, Nora."

"I was too much occupied in my new world, I presume, and the colonel never speaks other than well of his son to me. I should not suppose he would speak willingly of such a matter to any one."

"You are quite right. He did not speak of it even to me, but it was impossible to keep the matter quiet, and Owen Dare told me the truth of the story to save any prejudice I might gather through a floating, exaggerated report, though how it well could be exaggerated I can not comprehend."

"It is evident, then, that Mr. Dare himself was in no way anxious to spare you a prejudice. I should consider it a breach of honor to discuss a matter which the parties most concerned would not wish exposed. Possibly, too, Mr. Vivian might put another aspect on the affair."

"Not a more truthful one, I am sure. And the circumstance it seems was not even a warning to Vane. He is wilder, more reckless than ever since that. Think of such a young man running through with Thornhurst and all the colonel will have! Really, if I had a daughter of an age to marry who might choose between the two, I would not hesitate in preferring Dare for Vane's brilliant prospects. With all the property in his hands he would be a beggar in three years, and Owen Dare will build himself up from nothing yet, mark my words. Enough of that subject, however; though I haven't words to express my indignation when I think of my cousin's course. Do you care to go driving this afternoon, Nora?"

"I think I shall not go out to-day. It occurs to me, Mrs. Grahame, that we may not have done all our duty toward Mr. Vane Vivian. Wild and reckless young men have been reclaimed before this—why not again? I think I should like the credit for one returned prodigal laid at my door, and I am going to ask him to take me to the exhibition to-morrow."

"You are going to ask him, Nora?"

"I am going to ask him, Mrs. Grahame. Don't look so horrified, pray. You know he wouldn't ask me in an eternity. It's rather against my hopes that he has so little liking for me."

"I am not so sure of that, but I certainly thought you were particularly averse to him. I am positive I heard you refuse the colonel this morning when he was making arrangements for your going to the opera with Vane."

"That was quite another matter. I don't choose to be bartered by a third person, not even my guardian. Mr. Vivian shall refuse my request or accept it on his own account—not accommodate himself to another person's wishes. He is coming to dinner to-day, coming early he promised, and I am going to get myself up most charmingly for the occasion. I shall make a merit of charity and overcome my dislikes."

"Consult your own taste, of course, Nora, though it is not one of Vane's rules to keep a promise. Mrs. Grahame's voice was a trifle chilled and distant. She had meant to give the girl a warning of the reputation her wild young cousin had gained for himself, perhaps to insinuate the truth of the colonel's hopes which her sharp, worldly eyes had penetrated—the hope that through Nora Vane might be reclaimed—and to throw the weight of her influence far as it went on the side of her favorite, Dare. "If you really mean to rush into a Quixotic undertaking, be guided by my advice and begin systematically. Reconsider your decision of this warning and accept Vane's escort to the opera to-night. Too much Claret at dinner, followed by copious draughts of eau de vie through the evening, will tell on the hardest constitution, and it is not wonderful he has broken under the practices. For my own part I should decidedly prefer him for an evening companion than for an escort for the morning. You would be apt to find him *distrait* and unnerved to an uncomfortable degree, for my cousin Vane, among his other vices, numbers the one of very immoderate dissipation."

"Don't tell me anything more just now that's bad about him. I don't intend to be discouraged."

Mr. Vane Vivian proved an exception to his rule by keeping his promise that evening at least. He came early and found Nora vivid, sparkling, brightly joyous as she always was these late days. Her dress was pale-blue with a sheen which would light exquisitely, a full evening costume trained and puffed, with pearls, which were the colonel's gift, on her neck and arms and mingled with her ruddy hair.

She came forward as he was admitted in company with Dare to give her hand, while she deigned only a careless nod to the latter. Her first awakening to the real character of Dare had come more than two years before, and she was distrusting him without cause it might seem, but distrusting him heartily nevertheless.

"You deserve an especially warm welcome, Mr. Vivian. You are so chary about claiming many of them."

"My own loss, is it not? And I never gave you credit for observing whether I was present or not."

"You don't give me credit for half I do deserve, but I shall return good for evil by crediting you with more than I've had evidence of—a great deal of gallantry. Of course there's an ax to grind to draw that from me. The truth is our escort for the evening has made another engagement and we want to press you into service instead. The colonel is hard to entice into opera-going at the best, and it appears that Mr. Dare has power to make his promises void."

"That is meant as a reproach and it is not merited, Miss Carteret," said Dare, quickly. "I really understood you had declined going to the opera to-night. You know I could not

otherwise have brought myself to break upon your pleasure. Even my business with the colonel could have waited, and the honor of this service should not have been pressed upon Vane if my service could have compensated."

"You're so full of business these days it's little wonder if the colonel finds you invaluable, Dare. I couldn't wish you to be anything else since it gives me the pleasure of this attendance upon Miss Carteret. Won't you give me one song before dinner, Miss Carteret? It's extremely selfish to ask it, of course, but I fancy music may have charms to soothe a hungry man's soul well as the savage ear. Imagine a greater savage if you can than a famishing mortal in a drawing-room."

"Not meaning yourself, I hope," she laughed, as they moved away, "or do you never spare yourself?"

"Why should I?" he asked, somewhat bitterly. "Others do not spare me. It's all very proper of course. To stand well with all the world one wants to be like Dare there, *sans puer et sans reproche*."

She glanced up quickly, but the cloud which had touched it was already gone from the dark, slightly haggard, handsome face.

Dare, watching them, was inwardly furious. He had made his own choice; he had no right to expend even the free admiration he was giving her; his allegiance belonged elsewhere; but for all that he was bitterly jealous of every other man who looked admiringly upon the little girl he had held so lightly once. He was most bitter, most jealous of that handsome, wild young fellow, Vane Vivian. There had been secret envy in his heart always toward this far-off cousin, who had been born to a high place, to all the gold and purple, while he at the very best had been an equal by tolerance, a guest received through their generous hospitality who was not grateful, who was venomous in the secret hate he cherished. Such the Pythias of this modern brotherhood!

"You have been ahead all your life," thought Dare, his moody glance following Vane. "Once ahead is not always ahead, however. There may be a turn of the scale sooner than you think, and, with the power in my hands, now evil on earth could more than wipe out the score I owe you."

An old score long gathering, every sign of which had been well hidden by Dare's close, secretive nature, but which he brooded over, and looked forward to a reckoning neither distant nor uncertain. A scheme had been slowly unfolding in Dare's mind during these passing, gay, early winter days—a bold scheme, cruel as fate and almost as certain, with that human sleuth-hound set upon it.

Oh, for the shadows to fall on those two young heads, so close together now as he watched them! Oh, for the torture of that proud heart, so strangely, bitterly disciplined, back in the vicinity of Thornhurst! Oh, for Dare himself, going down into the blackness of infamy to avenge a wrong of his own envious fancying, to gain a point in this life, when all eternity could not wipe out the stain he was indelibly branding upon his own soul!

Vane was the ladies' escort to the opera that night, something to Mrs. Grahame's surprise, and more to her indignation. Miss Carteret's whim had taken more speedy shape and action than she had anticipated, and Mrs. Grahame was duly scandalized, as any conventional matron would have been, at the *outré* conduct of Colonel Vivian's ward. No one else thought it *outré*, it is safe to presume. There were a score of young men in the crowded auditorium who would have given much to stand in Vane Vivian's shoes that night, sins, shortcomings, enticing visions of *mania a potu* and squandered estates in prospective—one and all. Among them a half-dozen who would have punched the presuming puppy's head, provided they could, in a close match, with his well-developed muscle, if by so doing a single smile might have been won from the reigning belle. But only one, who came in late and watched her furtively, more than the play, would plot stealthily and execute faithfully, to work out the end he sought.

The evening brought a small triumph to Nora. Her heart was in this mission she had undertaken, and she played her card so cleverly that Vane himself proposed the exhibition, and begged her company there on the following day.

He was neither unnerved nor *distrait* when he presented himself the next morning. This past night had seen him in a spot which of late had known him but seldom during the hours of darkness, for but brief intervals at any time, his own well-furnished apartments. He had slept sweetly and peacefully as a child all the night through. And in another room which joined, Dare had lain wakeful, brooding, motionless, until the gray dawn had crept sluggishly into the murky streets, and the first stir of the day began.

Vane and Nora had agreed to go early to the academy where the exhibition took place, in time to avoid the throng of afternoon visitors who would crowd there. The hall was comparatively deserted, a few groups scattered here and there, a few strolling singly or in pairs, the soft radiance falling over the pictures on the walls, bringing them out in vivid tints.

They had made half the circuit, surprising each other by their sympathetic appreciations, when Vane stopped short, turned and looked earnestly at a gentleman who was following them leisurely up the hall.

"Wait here a moment, Miss Carteret. That is some one I ought to know, though by some means he seems decidedly out of place here. Not the sort of man one is likely to forget—by Jove!"

He was gone from her side with a sudden start, and a dozen steps in advance the two young men met with a warmth which almost brought a smile to Nora's lips.

"Talk of exuberant expression among women after that," she thought. "What a fine-looking gentleman the stranger is, not so handsome as Vane, but so frank and manly."

A tall, broad specimen of manhood he was, with straightforward, bright blue eyes, light-brown hair, cut close to his head, and a curling beard, bronze-brown in the morning sunlight. He was very plainly dressed, but she had time to observe how white and soft his hands were, and that a ruby ring burned upon his little finger, before they approached her.

"Miss Carteret," said Vane, flushed with pleasure still, "allow me to present a friend, Sir Rupert Archer—Sir Rupert, Miss Carteret. The surprise of this meeting has thrown me off my balance, I believe."

Nora managed to respond to the introduction creditably, though such unexpected facing of nobility almost took her breath away.

"Sir Rupert was the very best friend I had abroad, first in London, but afterward at Rome, Florence, and Naples. I couldn't believe my eyes at seeing you here. Just come, did you say?"

"By the last steamer, and I am overjoyed at this meeting as you possibly can be. You are the first lady I have spoken to since landing, Miss Carteret, and Vivian's the first familiar face I have seen. I have an appoint-

ment to meet a friend in—let me see—just half an hour from now,” consulting his watch, “and strolled in here to pass the intervening time.”

He lingered for ten minutes, talking mostly with Vane, addressing some remarks concerning the pictures, the morning, the great metropolis, and the voyage over, to Nora—such things as people speak of casually, but in that ten minutes Nora decided that she should like this Sir Rupert Archer, Vane's friend.

The two gentlemen changed cards at parting, and afterward Vane waxed eloquent over this same Sir Rupert, until Nora almost forgot the purpose which had been first in her mind when she left home that morning. He caught her eyes turned to his face wistfully as it came back to her, and broke off in the middle of a strain.

“You look as if you wanted to tell me something, Miss Carteret. I have been too elated myself to attend properly to your pleasure, I am afraid.”

“I do wish to speak to you, to tell you something I fear, and I may not have another opportunity. I wanted to warn you against Owen Dare. I feel certain, somehow, that he is not acting fairly by you. I believe he is trying to make trouble between you and your father, and yourself. I am sure he is not your friend, as he pretends. It must seem presumptuous for me to say this to you, but I believe it, and wanted you to know.”

“My dear Miss Carteret! Dare not my friend—Dare make trouble! I thank you sincerely for your good intentions, but you are laboring under some great mistake. You can't know how faithful Dare has been to me.”

“I know he has seemed so, but he is a hypocrite, I do believe. Would it not be better to go to your father yourself than to trust any go-between?”

Suddenly the haggardness which had been lifted from his face came back to it. Nora was chilled at the change; it put such a distance between them where they had been so near a moment ago.

“It is not to be expected you should understand these affairs, Miss Carteret. You are mistaken regarding Dare—you do him injustice. Think hardly of me as you like; you can do me no injustice. Shall we go home now?”

“You are not angry that I have spoken?” she asked, timidly.

He looked down at her, his face softening. “Angry? no. God bless you for it, Nora. But you can't know the kind of hell I am in!”

(To be continued—commenced in No. 262.)

The Rival Brothers. OR, THE WRONGED WIFE'S HATE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF “THE DARK SECRET,” “AWFUL
MYSTERY,” ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

HAZELWOOD HALL.

PIER No. — was crowded. Throngs of people were pouring to it in one steady stream; carts, carriages and vehicles of all sorts rattled over the stony city streets, and deposited their inside freight of travelers, and their outside freight of baggage on the thronged pier, blazing under a scorching July sun.

“Everybody” was supposed to have left New York, but New York looked tolerably full yet, judging from the number in this particular spot, coming to see their friends off for England, or from idle curiosity. The steamer's deck was thronged, too; in fact, every available portion of the steamer, excepting the smokepipe, was thronged, and great and mighty was the uproar thereof.

Among the many groups, a little knot of four persons stood, two ladies and two gentlemen. Place aux dames! The ladies were very young, mere girls in their teens, and one very pretty. It was the tall one with the coquettish turban that sat so jauntily on her black curls, the scarlet tip of its black plume not brighter than the living scarlet on cheek and lip; her tightly-fitting black basquine showing off to perfection a superb figure, lithe and slender as a young willow, and the morning sunlight floated back from a pair of luminous dark eyes, of unfathomable depth and brightness. She leaned lightly against the railing, the breeze fluttering her gray dress, the black lace veil she held in her gloved hand, waving like a black banner, the jetty curls, and deepening the roses in her cheeks, as she gazed at the crowd before her and talked with her companion.

It was the other young lady, a jolly little damsel, plump and debonnaire, whose laughing face was all aglow with excitement, and whose tongue ran in a perpetual flow of titillation. For the gentlemen: one was dark, elderly, sharp-looking, and wore spectacles; the other young, eminently handsome, and languidly indifferent to the vulgar uproar about him.

Of course you recognize them—Eve, Hazel, Doctor Lance and Professor D'Arville—professor no longer, but simply Monsieur Claude D'Arville, secretary to the Honorable Arthur Hazelwood, of Hazelwood, County of Essex, England. And they are fairly off on their journey at last.

And Hazel's chattering tongue was running on incessantly.

“Eve, look there! How killingly that gentleman stepping from the back is got up! Why, my goodness! I declare if it's not Don Signor Monsieur Mustache Whiskerando himself!”

Eve looked, knowing very well who Hazel meant, and saw a for-ign-looking and most distinguished gentleman alight from a hack, his cloak over his shoulder, in spite of the heat of that boiling July morning, and his sombrero pulled over his eyes. The memory of a moonlight night, of a Canadian village, and a stranger slipping up to the gate over which she leaned, flashed back on Eve's mind.

“It's Mister Mendez, I vow!” Hazel was crying. “It can't be possible, you know, that he—”

Hazel stopped suddenly. Among the surging sea of human beings, ebbing and flowing on the pier, another form had caught her eyes, that of a young man, who approached Senor Mendez, passed his arm through his and walked with him on board. Eve saw him at the same time, and her brows contracted in spite of Hazel's joyful little cry.

“Oh, Eve! there is Paul!”

“See him!” Eve said, in a vexed tone, “and they are coming here!”

She threw the veil she held over her hat to hide her flushed and annoyed face. She had not seen Paul Schaffer since that memorable night at his aunt's, and the scene under the pine-tree came back, and its hateful memory burned like fire in her face. Some one touched her lightly on the shoulder, and D'Arville's dark eyes were piercing through the veil.

“Here are two of your friends, mademoiselle. Ah! I perceive you have seen them!” His tone and smile annoyed her intensely, but the two new-comers had forced their way along the deck and stood before them, hat in hand.

Very coldly, very slightly, Miss Hazelwood acknowledged Mr. Schaffer's salute, choosing to ignore altogether the hand he extended, but Talleyrand himself never was more completely and utterly nonchalant than he. If the waters of Lethe had been a reality, and he had drunk out the memory of this last interview, Paul Schaffer could not have been one whit more at his ease.

If Eve's greeting lacked warmth, Hazel's made up for it; she pushed her hand through Paul's arm, as one having the right, and bore him off, while the Cuban prince attached himself to Doctor Lance and D'Arville. So Eve stood quite alone, listening to the storm of good-bys on every hand and watching the receding shore as they steamed away on their outward-bound course, to the parting cheer from the land, and then a mist came over the bright, dark eyes.

“Good-by to America! my native land!” her heart cried. “I have been in the land to which I go!”

There was no prophetic voice in Eve's soul to answer the question. The merciful veil that shrouds the future no earthly eyes might pierce; and Eve stopped in her musings to listen to a girlish voice near, singing, clear and sweet, Child Harold's farewell to England:

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue,
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew!

You sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in thy flight,
Farewell awhile to him and thee—
My native land, good-night!”

“Not good-night, the Lord be thanked!” said a broad voice, cutting in, “for it's just breakfast-time!”

There was a general laugh and rush for the cabin. D'Arville smilingly offered his arm to Eve, and sentiment was presently lost sight of in sandwiches; and coffee and beefsteaks took the place of tears and parting regrets.

“Will you be sea-sick, mademoiselle?” Senor Mendez asked Eve.

They were all sitting up on deck again, the land nearly out of sight, and Eve was between the creole and D'Arville.

“I don't know,” she said, laughing. “That remains to be seen yet. This you know, is my first voyage. Shall you?”

“Oh, no! I am an old sailor, and I never was sick in my life.”

“You are fortunate,” said D'Arville. “As for me, I expect to take my stateroom in an hour, and be obliged to keep it until we reach Southampton.”

“My case exactly,” growled Doctor Lance. “Among all wise proverbs, ‘Praise the sea, but keep on land,’ is the wisest. And to think I must endure it all for a couple of wretched girls—”

The crabbed little doctor's voice died away, pianissimo, in a succession of growls; and Hazel, who sat next him, rose abruptly, with a very white and miserable face.

“I—I think I'll go below! I don't feel—”

“No, I should think you didn't,” said Paul, trying to keep grave, but laughing in spite of himself, as Hazel's voice died away. “Allow me to lead you down-stairs.”

Eve followed, and for the rest of the day was kept busy enough waiting on Hazel, who was wretchedly sick, and amid her groans, and throes, and tears, protested she must die.

All night it was the same—poor Hazel's state was deplorable; and the odor of cooking which would penetrate into the stateroom aggravated her symptoms beyond expression.

It was late on the second day of the voyage before Eve could leave her and go on deck to catch a mouthful of fresh air. Fortunately for her she had escaped the *mal-de-mer* completely; and beyond being fagged out waiting on her sick and cross little cousin, felt as well as when she had started.

Wofully thin the deck looked to what it had done at the starting; very few ladies were there, and among the gentlemen only one face was familiar. He was leaning over the side watching the moon rise, red and round, out of the sea, like some fiery Venus, and smoking a cigar, but he threw it overboard and started up at sight of Eve.

“A thousand welcomes, mademoiselle! I am happier than happy to find you able to come up once more!”

“Oh, I have not been sick, monsieur,” Eve said, laughing, and answering in French, as Senor Mendez had set the example. “I have only been sick-nurse. My poor cousin is half dead!”

“I regret to hear it. Here, sit down and let us see if this fresh breeze will not blow your roses back. They have wilted altogether in that steaming and suffocating cabin.”

“Where are all the rest?” Eve asked, taking the proffered stool.

“In the same predicament as your cousin—all at death's door, Messieurs Lance, D'Arville, and Schaffer; and Robin-on Crusoe, in his desert island, never was lonelier than I! Providence, mademoiselle, must have sent you direct to my relief; for I was falling into despair, and meditating a leap overboard and into the other world, as you came up.”

“And out of the frying-pan into the fire!”

“*Qu'en savez-vous?*” said the creole, shrugging his shoulders, “we must only hope for the best! Look at that moonrise, mademoiselle—I have heard you were an artist.”

“Who told you so?”

“Monsieur D'Arville—he is a great friend of yours.”

Eve's face flushed.

“He was my teacher—at least, he would have been, had we not left Canada. I am an artist—I wish I were.”

“I wish you were; you might immortalize yourself to-night. Do you care for the sea?”

“Care is not the word, monsieur—I love it.”

“Ah! then we can sympathize. I have spent half the last fifteen years roving over land and sea. One of these rolling stones that gather no moss.”

“Then Madame Rumor tells fibs. She says Senor Mendez is a prince in his own land.”

“Why, yes,” said the creole, coolly. “I believe my estates in Cuba are rather princely than otherwise; but I don't allude to that. I have no home, and no home-ties; a crusty old bachelor, who goes whithersoever he listeth, with no kindly voice to bid him God-speed at his departure or welcome on his return.”

They were both silent, he looking straight before him at the red moonrise, and the girl watching, under her eyelashes, the bronzed, handsome face, and the silver threads gleaming in and out the raven hair.

“Monsieur has been a great traveler, then?” she said, at length, in a subdued tone.

“Over the world, mademoiselle, from Dan to Beersheba. I have ridden camels in Egypt,

smoked cigars under the walls of Jerusalem, slept in skins in an Esquimaux hut, and been grilled alive in the jungles of India and the forests of Africa. As for Europe—I think there is not a village in the whole continent I have not done, and found the whole thing an insufferable bore.”

“And you have been—but why need I ask—of course, you have been in England?”

“Yes, mademoiselle; I have explored that island—I have even beheld Hazelwood Hall.”

“Indeed?” Eve cried, vividly interested. “I should like to hear about that. Is it long ago?”

“Some five years. It is a fine old place, or would be in the hands of any other man than the Honorable Arthur Hazelwood. But pardon—he is your relative?”

“I know nothing about him; I never saw him in my life. Is he a *mauvais sujet*, then?”

“He is—but I shall tell you nothing about him—you must read him for yourself. I fear you will find your new home rather lonely—the owner of Hazelwood Hall receives no visitors, and never goes out.”

“A recluse, is he? Did you see Miss Forest?”

“The pale lady with the light hair, who keeps house for him? Oh, yes, I saw her; she never goes out, either—they grow old there, like potatoes in a cellar.”

“And the place around—what is it?—a town, a village, a wilderness—or what?”

“A village, very pretty, very picturesque. They call it Monkswood.”

“And Hazelwood Hall is the place of the place?”

“By no means! It is eclipsed altogether by another place some seven miles off, far older, far grander, and far more revered. Its name is Blackmonks—Blackmonks Priory—and its owner is Lord Landsdowne.”

“Oh! and the village has taken its name from the priory?”

“Exactly. Long ago, when Mary was queen in England, this priory of Blackmonks was founded there, under her patronage. When Elizabeth came into power, the monks were sent adrift, and Baron Landsdowne, a sturdy old warrior, whose portrait still adorns the grand entrance-hall, took this place. It has been in the possession of the Landsdownes ever since, and is likely to be while the race lasts.”

“Is the present Lord Landsdowne resident at the priory?”

“Not when I was there—he was on the continent with his lady. He must have been a fine fellow, for he was idolized in the place. I think I would like Blackmonks; it is quite magnificent in its ancient grandeur, I assure you. Hazelwood dwindles into nothing beside it.”

“And Mr. Hazelwood is not liked in Monkswood?”

“Why, the fact is, mademoiselle, he is looked upon as a good deal of a stranger, and considerable of an intruder. He is a Yankee, too—I beg your pardon,” seeing her flush hotly; “and, in short, there is no love lost between them. Perhaps it may be different now—I will find out when I go there.”

“Are you going there?”

“Yes; I have business in Essex. Well, sir, what do you want?”

This last was addressed to one of the cabin-waiters who approached them. The man wanted Miss Hazelwood—the sick young lady in No. 35 had sent him in search of her; and Eve had to go.

That evening's conversation was but the beginning of many. Senor Mendez was cheering—he beguiled the long hours for her with wonderful stories of his adventures in India, Africa, and China, and the Holy Land—Eve thought the Thousand and One were nothing to him. Then, too, after the first week, D'Arville was able to come up, a little wan and spectral at first, after his sickness—but Eve blushed frankly at seeing him, and held out her hand with a shy grace, that might have bewitched old Diogenes himself. Very pleasant to Miss Evangeline Hazelwood was the voyage after that; at least, the hours spent on deck; for Hazel kept sick still, and was cross and querulous, and monopolized Eve half the time. And Eve, being good-natured and kind-hearted, and very fond of the impatient little invalid, read to her, and sung to her, and retailed Senor Mendez's stories, and brought daily little messes to tempt the flagging appetite. Doctor Lance, being as poor a sailor as his elder ward, was invisible also; and though Paul Schaffer made his appearance on deck, Eve was very little troubled with him. Once, finding her alone, he had attempted to accost her with his customary cool nonchalance, but La Princesse had drawn back and up, with eyes that flashed black flames, and had swept past him in such superb, silent scorn, that even he never attempted it again. Eve had not seen the ominous smile with which he looked after her, nor heard his half-muttered words.

“My bird of Paradise sails high, but I think I will clip her glittering wings before long. La Princesse reigns it right royally, but I think I will humble her pride before she is many weeks older. Be as scornful as you like, my dear Eve—smile as sweetly as you please on Monsieur D'Arville—we will change your tune when you are Madame Schaffer; for Madame Schaffer you will be, in spite of earth and all it contains!”

From that time until the end of the voyage, Monsieur Schaffer never attempted to address Eve when alone; but when others were with her, and she could not, without exciting remark, help answering him, he was ever near, in spite of brightly angry glances, forcing answers from her reluctant lips.

When they entered the railway-carriage, at Southampton, it was he who handed her in, leaving Miss Hazel, who had a sick and seagreen look still, to the care of D'Arville. He sat beside her, too, all the way; for he was going to Essex first; he might as well travel with company while he could, he said; and his proximity spoiled the journey for the young lady. D'Arville devoted himself to Hazel, who looked worried and jealous; and Doctor Lance was deep in discussion with Senor Mendez on some new scientific discovery.

Eve was heartily glad when, in the golden sunset of an August evening, they rattled up to the terminus, and she saw the word, “Monkswood,” painted above the little station.

“You come with me, I presume, monsieur?” Senor Mendez said, leaning forward, and speaking to Mr. Schaffer.

“Of course. We are fellow-voyagers in our pilgrimage through this to me, unknown land. Is there a hotel in this one-hour village?”

“There is an inn—a *chef d'œuvre* in its way, I assure you. You had better take this fly. Doctor Lance—Miss Wood looks fit to die of fatigue.”

“My poor Hazel! You do look terribly used up,” laughed Paul, “while Miss Eve's roses are still unwithed. Adieu, ladies! Doctor, will we be allowed to go up to the hall and pay our respects?”

“I know nothing about it,” snarled the doctor, whose temper was not improved by the discomforts of traveling. “Here, you girls! pile in, and let's be off.”

The two gentlemen, left behind, took off their hats to the young ladies as the fly drove away, and then set off for their inn.

“A pretty place, this English village—is it not, mademoiselle?” D'Arville said, speaking to Eve.

“Oh, it is charming! These gardens and cottages, and queer old houses and churches, and there—what place is that?”

“Blackmonks Priory,” said Doctor Lance, just glancing at a great park as they rattled by. “We have no time for stopping to stare now. You'll see enough of it before you leave here. I'll warrant you.”

They left the village behind, and drove along a lovely country road, where the houses were few and far between, and Eve began to look out for Hazelwood Hall.

They soon reached it; two great gates swung back to admit them, and they drove through the amber haze of sunset up a winding avenue to a great, gloomy looking old house, silent and lonely as a tomb.

“What a dismal old barn!” said Hazel, fretfully. “And this is Hazelwood Hall! I wish I was back in New York! I'm sick of England already!”

A servant out of livery—a solemn-looking old man—opened the door, and stared agape at the party. He admitted them, however, answering Doctor Lance's sharp questions as he did so.

“Yes; master was at home, but ill, and confined to his room; and Miss Forest, she was in London, and would not be back until next day. He would take the doctor's card, however, and see if he could be received; meantime, would they be pleased to wait here?”

Eve scarcely knew whether to laugh or cry, as he ushered them into a dark, and grand, and gloomy reception-room—it was all so different from what she had anticipated.

“I wish I was back in New York—I do!” Hazel reiterated, drearily. “I shall die in this horrid place—I know I shall!”

The sober old servant was back directly. “Master would receive the gentlemen in his room, and one of the chambermaids, in the absence of Miss Forest, would attend to the young ladies.”

The chambermaid, a very spruce young lady, entered while he was speaking, and respectfully proffered to lead them to their rooms, which were ready and waiting.

Eve cast a half-glance, half-dismayed, wholly-bewitching glance back at D'Arville, and tripped from the room, up a grand staircase, slippery as glass, down a long hall, and into a chamber in the same large, sombre and grand style as the rest of the house.

Hazel's was adjoining; but Hazel declared nothing earthly would induce her to pass the night alone in such a place, and dispatched the girl for refreshments, with information that she and her cousin would be room mates.

“And now I'm going to bed,” said Hazel, after the tea and toast had vanished; “for I feel as though I could sleep a week! Will you come?”

“No,” said Eve, taking up her hat; “I am going out to have a look at the grounds. It is a great deal too early for bed. I wonder if I can find my way out?”

She did find her way out, somehow, and wandered down to the great gates, standing wide open. To her surprise, she found no less a personage than Senor Mendez there before her, talking to the porter, and smoking a cigar.

“You here?” Eve cried, in her astonishment. “I thought you had gone to the inn.”

“No! I did; but I rode up here afterward; there is my horse yonder. How do you like your new home?”

Eve did not immediately reply. A carriage was passing—a very grand affair—drawn by two superb grays in silver harness, and from the window a face was looking out at them, as it rolled slowly by.

A lady's face, handsome and haughty, glancing out for an instant, and then disappearing.

Eve turned to reply to the gentleman's question, but stopped again.

What ailed Senor Mendez? His face had turned as white as a dead man's, and his eyes were strained, as if they would start from his head, after the carriage, vanishing in a cloud of dust.

“Monsieur!” Eve cried out, in alarm, “you are ill!”

Her voice aroused him. He turned to her, but, in spite of all his efforts, it was nearly a minute before he could speak.

“It is nothing—a heavy spasm—quite gone now. My friend” (to the gate-keeper) “whose carriage is that?”

“Lady Landsdowne's, sir,” the man said; “and that was my lady herself a-looking out of the window.”

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO OLD FRIENDS.

THROUGH long corridors, wainscotted rooms, lofty and large, up sweeping staircases, and into galleries and gloomy drawing-rooms, where the furniture was black with age, and grim old ancestors and ancestresses frowned down from oak panels, Eve and Hazel went the morning after their arrival in Hazelwood Hall. An old butler, as antique and gloomy as anything he showed them, was their cicerone, and looking upon two young ladies in that house, where young ladies had never been before, time out of mind, very much in the light of interlopers, he vouchsafed them as little information as possible about what they saw. Monsieur D'Arville was closeted with the invisible master of the mansion, and had suggested the idea at breakfast to kill time until he should be released.

“A horrid old barn as ever I saw!” was Hazel's displeased criticism, looking round the dim old saloon. “I wish I was back in New York; the Tombs there was a palace compared to it! What do you call that old chap up there in the white, woolly wig, and all those ridiculous ruffles, Mister?”

“That is the portrait of the late Judge Hazelwood, Miss,” answered the old butler, with slow dignity.

“And that other scarecrow beside him, with the waist of her dress under her arms, and sleeves like two bolsters—who is she? Mrs. Judge Hazelwood, I suppose?”

“It is, Miss.”

“Did you ever see such looking shapes, Eve? I say, though, are we near done sight-seeing? They ought to have horse-cars or something to run through this house—I'm just dragged off my feet traveling! The Ramble in Central Park was plain sailing compared to it!”

“Hazel, don't be so innocent,” said Eve, barely able to keep from laughing at the shocked and scandalized face of the ancient servant; “it's a dear romantic old place, and I'm in love with it already.”

“Yes; you always had outlandish tastes, I know,” said Hazel, discontentedly; “but when we're both laid up with rheumatism, and fever

and ague, and consumption, and lots of other harms that we'll be sure to catch in this damp, musty vault, you'll sing a different tune, I dare say. Oh, I wish I was back in New York! even the *penitential* was a king to this! Here we are in the blessed sunshine again, *Dieu merci!*”

They had reached the grand entrance hall, where the old butler bowed and left them, shocked out of a year's growth.

“I wonder when we are to be admitted to the throne of the Grand Mogul, Hazel,” laughed Eve; “he is as mysterious as Mokanna himself!”

“Who was Mokanna? I don't care about the Grand Mogul; but I do wish Paul would come up to-day! Do you suppose he will?”

“I don't know; and with due reverence to you—don't care.”

“Oh, of course not! but if Senor Mendez was in question, perhaps you might. Paul says, the way you flirted with that gay and festive old scamp on shipboard was shameful!”

Eve's eyes began to flash.

Hazel! did Paul Schaffer dare to say that?

“Dare! Oh, you have not done acting the role of La Princesse yet, I see! Tell your old beau, Eve, to dye his hair before he proposes; it's getting frosty, rather! There, you needn't fire up now; I'm not going to fight this morning, because you're the only living Christian I've got to talk to, and bad company is better than none! I wish Monsieur D'Arville would come back, if the Grand Mogul hasn't had him beheaded.”

“*Quand un parle du—*be careful what you say, mademoiselle!” said D'Arville himself, sauntering in. “I come from the Grand Mogul with his Serenity's orders for you two young ladies to appear at once before him! I am to lead you to the presence-chamber; so come!”

His dark eyes were laughing while he spoke, though his face was serious, and he offered an arm to each, to lead them forth.

“Is it going to be very terrible?” Eve asked, as they went up-stairs.

“Very. Summon all your moral courage, and I will wait at the door. If you faint, give me notice beforehand, and I will fly to your aid.”

“Well, I'm pretty curious,” said Hazel, “but I ain't scared to speak of. Is this the place? wait for us outside, monsieur.”

der as fifteen years before, and Una Forest at thirty was a very prepossessing little person, indeed. She floated forward now, in a dress of gray silk prettily made and trimmed, a smile on her pale, thin lips, and a hand extended to each of the girls.

"At last," she said, in the soft, sweet voice of old, touching first the cheek of Eve, then of Hazel, "welcome to England and to Hazelwood Hall."

"Thank you," Eve said, a little timidly, while Hazel stared at her in silence. "You are Miss Forest, of course."

"Yes, my dear; and you are the little baby Evangeline, I left in New York over fifteen years ago; grown out of all knowledge. And this is the three-year-old Hazel, who used to torment me so, looking the younger of the two. And this gentleman?"

She paused, looking composedly at D'Arville, who stood in the background. He stepped forward, on hearing himself invited, with an easy bow—his composure as matchless as her own.

"I am Mr. Hazelwood's secretary, madam. My name is D'Arville."

Miss Forest bent her fair little head in silent greeting, and turned once more to look at Eve.

"How very tall you have grown, my dear, and how much older than your age you look! Your voyage does not seem to have affected either of you much; were you sick?"

"Hazel was; I had the good fortune to escape."

"Ah, you may well call it good fortune! I know what sea-sickness is! Was the voyage pleasant?"

"Very! We had a number of friends on board—all the way with us, in fact—and the time went like magic."

"Speak for yourself," cut in Miss Hazel. "I dare say it went like magic for you and your old Spanish beau, but I could tell a different story—put up in a stew-tub of a stateroom. There wasn't an hour from the time we started till we landed I didn't wish might be our last, if only for spite to see the way you acted; and I used to put fervently the steam-er might run into a rock or a mermaid, or something, and pitch head first to Davy Jones, and so end it all!"

Miss Forest's light-blue eyes and smiling face were turned on the spirited speaker of this reckless avowal, studying her as she had been studying Eve.

"You have not changed, I see, my dear; the Hazel of three years lies yet in the Hazel of eighteen. And now, where is Doctor Lance? Is he with Mr. Hazelwood?"

"He has gone back," said Eve. "He went by the express last night to London, and starts in the next steamer for New York."

"A flying visit! I should like to have seen him. Have you been through the house?"

"Oh, yes," said Hazel, "we've been through it, and, except the prison up in Sing Sing, that they took me to see once, I never went through a more ghostly place! Isn't it full of ghosts?"

Miss Forest's eyes and smile were on Hazel again. Eve looked nearly as shocked as the old butler had done, and D'Arville intensely amused.

"I really don't know. I never saw any." "Well, it must be full of rats anyhow, and they're as bad, if not worse. They'd no more keep such an old rat-trap as this standing in New York than—Oh, Eve! here is Paul and Senor Mendez! I declare if they're not."

Hazel sped off down-stairs in an ecstasy. Eve looked out of the window, and saw the two gentlemen in question just going up the stone steps leading to the front door.

"Friends of yours?" Miss Forest inquired, looking in calm surprise on Eve. "I did not know you had any in the village."

"We knew them in Canada," Eve answered, coloring suddenly, and the two looking at her wondered inwardly which of them the blush was for. "I suppose I must go down."

"Of course, and I must go and see about my household affairs. I came here directly on arriving. Farewell—luncheon-hour is at two; at six we dine."

She bowed in her easy, graceful way and left them. Eve, her face still hot, spoke to D'Arville without looking at him.

"Are you coming down, Monsieur? They will want to see you."

"Do you think so?" he said, meaningly.

"Of course. Come!"

She led the way down-stairs, without waiting, and D'Arville followed her. In the grand and gloomy drawing-room they found Hazel chatting away like a magpie to the gentlemen. She was painting their portraits in vivid colors, and her auditors were laughing faces, but both turned eagerly to the door when Eve entered. She gave her hand frankly and cordially to Senor Mendez, but she just touched Mr. Schaffer's extended digit, as if it had been red-hot, and dropped it again.

"You see we have found our way to Hazelwood Hall," Schaffer said. "A fine old place, but nothing to Black Monk's Priory. Senor Mendez and I were over there this morning."

"That's great praise, to say it's nicer than this," said Hazel, contemptuously. "It's another old vault, I suppose. Oh, give me a brown-stone front on Fifth avenue, and you have my idea of heaven on earth at once."

"You shall have it," said Mr. Schaffer, in a voice audible only to her, "when you and I go back to New York together. You ought to see it, Miss Hazelwood," raising his tone. Hazel might not fancy it, but I am sure you would."

"She saw Lady Landsdowne last night, and fancied her excessively. Did you not, Miss Eve?" asked Senor Mendez.

"I told you I thought her a most beautiful woman, and," rather mischievously, "I think she affected yourself, senor, even more than I, for you turned as white as that marble bust up there at sight of her!"

"Was it at sight of her?" said Senor Mendez, coolly.

"I thought I told you it was a spasm." "Oh, yes, you told me that, of course; but I know you watched the carriage out of sight, and inquired very particularly about her from the lodge-keeper. Is the Priory shown to visitors?"

"Not when the family are at home, as now," said Mr. Schaffer. "I was disappointed in my hopes of going through it to-day, and I hope the family may make their exodus soon for my benefit. We saw the grounds, though, and the exterior of the mansion, and very magnificent both are. What is more, we saw Lord Landsdowne, though I should have preferred seeing his lady."

"And is he as lovely to look at as she seems to be?" inquired Hazel.

"No, he is not what you girls would call handsome; he is tall and stately, gentlemanly, and rather distinguished-looking, grave and middle-aged."

"Grave!" said the Cuban. "I should say so! His face is that of a man whose life has been a great mistake."

"Do you judge from faces?" asked D'Arville, speaking for the first time. "If so, I should

like you to see the mistress of this establishment, and read me her character. I have been puzzling over it ever since I saw her."

"Is she a study, then?" "Is she pretty?" that's the question?" interrupted Paul Schaffer. "A pretty woman never can be very disagreeable."

Senor Mendez looked at the last speaker, and so queer a smile, so bitter, so cynical and so scornful came over his face, that a new light dawned on Eve's mind. It broke on D'Arville's, too, and he spoke:

"Senor Mendez has lost faith in the sex, but it is not fair to judge all by one. Miss Forest is no common woman, and not to be judged by common rules. She is pretty, too, but it is a strange type of prettiness—unfamiliar to me."

"The more charming, then, I should think," said Paul Schaffer. "Prenez garde de tomber, Monsieur D'Arville!"

Monsieur D'Arville's lips curled at the insinuation, and just then there was a tap at the door. D'Arville opened it, supposing it to be a servant, and was taken rather aback to find himself confronted by the fair, still face and soft gray dress of Miss Forest herself. He stepped back, holding the door open for her to enter, but she declined.

"Do not let me disturb you! Mr. Hazelwood desired me to tell you to go to him directly after luncheon, and luncheon waits now."

She was gone again. D'Arville closed the door and looked at the rest.

"Is that the Marble Bride turned Quakeress?" asked Mr. Schaffer. "Her voice is like the music of the spheres, though I can't say I ever heard that melody."

"I take it upon myself to say that is Miss Forest," said Senor Mendez.

"And something out of the common—do you not think so?" inquired D'Arville.

"Decidedly, or she would have invited us to luncheon," said the creole gentleman, rising; "but as she has not, we make our exit. Miss Eve, Miss Hazel, you should go down and see Monkswood; it is worth the journey, I assure you."

"We will," said Eve, "and perhaps this afternoon. Eh, Hazel?"

"All right," said Hazel. "I was bound to go any way; and, what's more, I am going to call at the Priory, too. Will you gentlemen chaperone us—we might go astray in this barbarous land."

The gentlemen assented that they would only be too happy and blessed to do so, and took their departure, and the trio sought the dining-room. Miss Forest was waiting there, before a table glittering with silver and cut-glass, and took her place at the head at once.

"I have grown so accustomed to being alone on these occasions," she said, smilingly, "that I fear I have half-forgotten how to preside. Mr. Hazelwood so rarely leaves his room, and we never see company, so I live like a female Robinson Crusoe. Let me help you to some of this pigeon-pie, Mr. D'Arville."

"You are worse off than Robinson Crusoe was," put in pert Hazel, "for he had a man—Friday."

Miss Forest only noticed this speech by a cold stare, and went on carving the pie. It was not a very comfortable meal; for the solemn old butler hovered in the background, glaring upon them all in awful silence, and Miss Forest was so very ceremonious and stately, that it completely took away even Hazel's appetite.

"I declare, Eve, I'm starving!" she burst out, when it was safely over at last, and they were alone, D'Arville having gone to Mr. Hazelwood's apartments. "I'll be skin and bone shortly, if this state of things continues. I hate that Una Forest! There!"

"Hazel, hush!"

"I won't hush; and you don't like her yourself, only you're too great a hypocrite to say so. I wonder if there is such a thing as an oyster-saloon in Monkswood?"

"Oyster-saloon!—rubbish! Do you think you are back in New York?"

"Oh, don't wish I only was! But there must be a cookshop, or a baker's establishment, or something or other there, to keep people from starving. I'm going to see, any way. Will you come?"

"Of course—anything for a quiet life. Wait till I get my hat."

Arm in arm the two girls strolled down the avenue to the gates, and passed out into the highroad. Pretty green lanes branched off from this road right and left; and, passing one, Eve stopped suddenly, holding Hazel back. The young lady, following her cousin's glance, saw nothing more startling than a group of three persons standing under the shadow of some ash-trees, talking—one, a man; the other two, females. The man had his back toward them, but his light and form were too familiar to be mistaken. The woman nearest him was old, bent, and faced them; but the hood of her crimson cloak partly concealed her face. The third leaned against a tree, shadowed by its long arms, so that only her floating skirts and gipsy hat were visible.

"What is Paul Schaffer up to now?" asked Eve. "And, Hazel, isn't that the old fortune-teller we saw at Madam Schaffer's the night of the *fete*?"

"Nonsense! How could she get to England? It looks like her, though, don't it? That's Paul for certain; and who can the third one be? I think it's a young girl."

"I am certain that is the same old woman. There! she sees us, and is gone!"

The old woman had caught sight of them, and she and her female companion disappeared among the trees. The man turned round and advanced. Paul Schaffer it certainly was, and as much as his ease as ever.

"What?" was his greeting. "You, too, here! Well, this is an unexpected pleasure!" Hazel looked at him with jealous eyes.

"Is it a pleasure, sir? Who were those two women you had with you there?"

"Oh, you saw them, did you? Gipsies, of course; didn't you see their red cloaks? There's an encampment of them in the woods, and I was having my fortune told."

"Eve says it's the old woman we saw at Madam Schaffer's *fete*—the fortune-teller, you know."

"Mr. Schaffer pardon! he said to Eve; 'but that is rather too droll a notion! She is quite as old and quite as ugly, I agree; but all the old beldames look alike.'"

"Were they both old women, Paul?" Hazel asked, taking his arm, and quite reassured.

"Of course! Come, Senor Mendez is waiting somewhere, and we are going to take you both to see Black Monks. Oh, here he comes with the fly; and now, my dear Hazel, you will see something that will eclipse the whole Fifth avenue, with Madison square thrown in! There is not a finer place in England, they tell me, than Black Monk's Priory."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 257.)

How much easier it is to be generous than just! Men are sometimes bountiful who are not honest.—Junius.

Old Bull's-Eye, THE LIGHTNING SHOT OF THE PLAINS.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CANNIBALS' STRONGHOLD.

To at least three hearts the dying words of Chiquita proved a bitter blow. Dugrand had hoped to find at least a daughter. Though Old Bull's-Eye had found the child for whom he had hunted through many a long, weary year, and Carmela had found the father she had often speculated about, the relationship seemed a tame and unsatisfactory one after "what might have been," only for this death-bed revelation.

"Well, little one," said Old Bull's-Eye, soberly, "you'll have to make the best of it. Your life hasn't been much the better for a father thus far, but, please God, I'll try and make amends."

Carmela received his embrace quietly, but her face was pale and her lips quivered. However, it was but natural that she should be affected by this strange finding of a parent.

Old Bull's-Eye, assisted by Perry, Luis, Toole and others, soon scooped out a grave in the soft sand, and all that was mortal of Chiquita—or Dolores Vermilye—was soon hidden from view. The scout bowed over the rude grave for a few moments, and may have breathed a silent prayer, but none was uttered audibly. Nor was there a tear dropped as the party turned away. A strange life she had led—a strange burial was hers.

"What's the next move, cap'n?" suddenly asked Murph. Toole, addressing Dugrand, who was squatted upon the sand in moody meditation.

"I don't know—our work is done here," was the sharp reply. "I suppose we'll have to take the back track."

"It's a long trail to water, that's a-way, boss. I don't reckon our critters kin stand more'n one more day 'thout drink."

"What can we do? Do you expect me to call up a lake or a river here in the very heart of the desert?" snarled Dugrand.

"That's water, yonder, a-plenty. Ef you say the word, cap'n, we'll go an' help ourselves," quickly replied Toole.

"What do you mean? Speak out plain, man."

"All right, boss. That 'mong them hills yonder, is whar the kin o' these critters," coolly nodding toward the dead Cayugas, "hang out. In course they must hev water, which is jest what we want, the wust way, an' so the boys thinks the best we kin do is to clean out the red niggers right off."

"It may not be so easy; but I'm agreeable. We do need water, and I don't know where we can find it short of the *motte* where we ambushed the Red Hawks, unless we do try these rascals. It may be tough work, but we're used to that. Hallo, there, boys!" he added, raising his voice. "This fellow here says you're burning for a chance at the red-skins yonder. Is it so?"

The answer came as with one voice; Murph. Toole had exactly expressed their wishes. They had not forgotten the marvelous tales told by the outlaw, Dick Croghan, during the past day and night, of the great stores of gold that the Cayugas had amassed. He declared that, in the little basin where the cannibal village stood, gold lay around in nuggets common as the sands of the desert—that the very walls of their lodges were built of the precious metal. And, though they affected to laugh at and ridicule the stories, the wonder-loving bordermen confidently expected to reap a rich harvest of plunder.

"What do you think of this move?" Perry Abbot asked Old Bull's-Eye, as they plodded along through the fast-deepening shades of night.

"It's the best thing we can do, for, though we will be apt to see some tough fighting, we must have water, and that soon. I don't believe one-half of us could live through the trip back to the nearest water-hole. It was always scarce enough, but this big fire has licked up every drop as far as it went—which is hundreds of miles, I take it."

It was barely possible that the brief fight with Skoket-nah had passed unnoticed by the Cayugas at the village, and acting upon this supposition, the Man-hunters pressed on in hopes of effecting a complete surprise. They did not know how strong a force they were about to meet, but with reckless daring paused not to count their chance. They knew that they must win their way to the springs of the basin, or perish of thirst in the desert. There was no alternative.

The distance proved deceptive, the traveling difficult and laborious, and their horses being jaded, the eastern horizon was already growing gray when they reached the circle of vegetation that surrounded the low hills. The gray rocks frowned down upon them, but all was silent. Not a sound stirred the air save as the horses greedily cropped the short grass, while Toole and Old Bull's-Eye advanced to reconnoiter.

They soon returned. Nothing suspicious had been seen or heard. They had discovered a pass that appeared to lead into the basin, and had examined it for some little distance. It was practicable for horsemen, but an enemy upon the alert, could inflict terrible damage upon any who attempted to follow the pass, by hurling rocks from the heights above.

"It may be that they haven't seen us, but to make sure, I will go ahead on foot, with a couple of good men, and if there is any ambush, we will be apt to spring it," said the scout.

"Very well—choose your men," briefly replied Dugrand.

"Murph Toole for one—he can pick out another," said Old Bull's-Eye, passing back to where Carmela and Anita were. "You girls must keep back here out of danger. You look after them, Abbot."

"I'm going with you," quietly, but firmly uttered Carmela.

"You must not—there, don't put on that look, little one. Remember I have the right to command your obedience now, since I am your father. You will stay?"

"If you say I must," pouted the maiden.

Old Bull's-Eye kissed her tenderly, and then hastened away. He, with Toole and another, looked to their rifles and entered the pass. This was narrow, scarcely affording room for two horsemen to pass abreast, the sides nearly perpendicular for fifty feet, then breaking into a thousand cracks and crevices, affording good cover for a thousand men, if need be. If the Cayugas had observed the pale-faces, it would be difficult dislodging them.

Silently as specters the three scouts glided along the dark pass, keenly peering above their heads at the rocks, which, receiving the light of dawn earlier, were much lighter than below. For some minutes nothing suspicious was observed, and Old Bull's-Eye was about to give the agreed-upon signal telling the Man-hunters

to advance, when an Indian almost directly above his head, exposed his upper body, peering out at the motionless body of horsemen beyond. Quick as thought the scout's riflespoke, and the sharp report was blended with a shrill death-shriek as the stricken Cayuga came tumbling headlong from his perch. And then, with a noise as though the very hills were being overthrown by an earthquake, rocks and boulders came crashing down into the pass, hurled by invisible hands.

More by good fortune than any exercise of skill upon their part, the whites escaped injury from the rocky avalanche, and seeing how vain would be the attempt to hold their position under the circumstances, Old Bull's-Eye gave the word to retreat. Favored by the shadows, this was successfully executed, and the main body regained.

"We can charge through there," exclaimed Dugrand.

"And get rubbed out—the biggest half of us. No, there's only one way, that I see," quietly replied Old Bull's-Eye. "Pick out twenty of your best shots. Give me half of them, let the others follow Murph Toole. We'll take to the rocks, and I reckon the varmints won't do much stone-throwing. We can pick off every one that shows his head, and you can ride through the pass without any trouble."

The plan seemed feasible, and no one could offer a better one, so the selection was made, and the two parties of skirmishers began scaling the steep sides of the hills, taking advantage of every point of cover, their rifles and revolvers ready for the deadly work before them.

Though the Cayugas must have noted and understood the movement, not a brave could be seen. The hills seemed deserted and undefended. But then—a sharp cry came from one of Toole's party, and a feathered shaft quivering held in his breast, the unfortunate borderer toppled over and fell, rebounding from point to point, pausing at last upon the rock floor of the pass, a dead, mangled heap of mortality.

The breath had scarce left his body before he was avenged. And then the sharp twanging of bowstrings, the rapid detonations of rifles and revolvers were mingled with the shrill yell and defiant cheer. The rock fight was fairly opened.

Captain Dugrand was not a man to allow such a favorable moment to pass unimproved, and gave the word to advance, leading the way. The pass was so narrow that they were forced to keep single file, and pressed their animals to the highest rate of speed the poor brutes were capable of. Near the center of the line rode Anita and Carmela, guarded by Luis and Perry.

Fortunate was it that the Cayugas were so fully occupied by the sharpshooters above, else, with the thousands of loose boulders and fragments of rock that lay thickly scattered along the ledges, they could have annihilated the slender column below.

Dugrand, as he neared the further end of the defile, caught a glimpse of several savages, lurking behind the rocks, evidently resolved to dispute his passage. Shouting back a warning, he dashed boldly on, and the next moment found himself in the midst of two score brawny warriors. Right and left his pistols sent their death-warrants, and a moment later he was nobly seconded by half a score of his own men.

The Cayugas fought desperately, but their primitive weapons were no match for the many-tongued revolvers, and they fell before the unintermitted blaze of fire like ripe grain before the reaper's sickle. The struggle scarce occupied one minute, before the scanty remnant of Cayugas broke and fled, leaving two-thirds of their number dead or dying. Not entirely unavenged, though Dugrand had scarcely received a scratch, four of his men had fallen, dead.

"Follow me, lads!" he shouted. "Look at the hounds—setting fire to their houses!"

Before them lay a circular valley, almost basin-like, gradually sloping from every side toward the center, where glistened a good-sized pond of water. Around this were dozens of neat huts, composed of skins and light poles. The Cayugas were now hastily setting fire to these, while a number of squaws and children were fleeing rapidly away, toward the hills. And then, this work of destruction well under way, the Cayugas retreated, covering their women and children with a sullen bravery that commanded the admiration of even the sternest Indian-hater among the Man-hunters. Yet this did not prevent them from pressing the savages hotly, and it was not until the basin was almost crossed that the fight ceased. Then, seeing their women safe among the rocky hills, the braves broke and fled. The whites did not care to follow, just then. For once they had their fill of fighting, and hastened back to the silver pond, where men and horses quenched their thirst together.

Meanwhile Old Bull's-Eye had his hands full. The Cayugas were snugly ensconced among the rocks, and were adepts in the peculiar warfare. But the quick eye and unerring aim of the plainsmen marked down every red-skin that showed himself, and when, from the sounds beyond, the Cayugas knew that the whites had forced their way into the basin, they abandoned the uneven contest. Darting from rock to rock, perfectly familiar with every inch of the ground, the savages effected the retreat without the loss of another brave.

Half an hour later, the sharpshooters rejoined their friends at the pond.

In one of the huts that had escaped the conflagration, a quantity of dried horse-flesh was found, and, in default of better food, furnished a meal for the invaders. Anita and Carmela glided entered this and were soon oblivious to all their troubles, locked in a deep and refreshing sleep, guarded by three devoted sentinels, nor did they wake until nearly sunset.

It was resolved to remain in the cannibals' stronghold until the next day, when the horses would have recovered their wind, strength and spirits. Through the day the majority of the men slept, a few remaining on guard, lest the Cayugas should attempt to drive the invaders away, but that night nearly every man was upon the alert, weapons in hands. All lights were extinguished. The horses were hopped and tied near the pond.

The hours wore on, yet no sound came from the hills. Day-dawn approached—and then! Loud and clear echoed forth the wild wailing cry of the cannibals—a flight of arrows swept through the camp—and the next moment it was a deadly struggle, hand to hand.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 255.)

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MY OLD AUNT JANE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Kind-hearted soul of my young years
Smooth be the turf and grassy!
She always met me with a smile,
And "Lors a mercy massy!"

Whatever way her fate might be
She bore it all with patience;
Kind words she used on every hand,
And snuff on all occasions.

She gave her counsel seasoned with
Full many a scriptural passage,
And met the poor beside her door
With "John, bring out them sassidge."

No matter what the ill might be
She looked on it with reason;
Her temper well she did preserve—
And quines in their season.

She treated all with due regard,
No faults on others casting;
Thus many friendly ties she knit—
And stockings that were lasting.

Bright beamed her eye with hope and love
As through this life she wended,
Her careful judgment e'er was good—
Her chicken pot-pies splendid.

In looking upon others' woes
Her eyes went often swimming,
She wore her grace with meek heart,
And hat with little trimming.

Peace sat upon her brow serene,
And proved her life-long blessing;
Wise words were ever in her mouth,
Her pipe was never missing.

My maiden aunt, through all the years
Her memory shall sweeten;
Her kindness never was surpassed—
Her spongecakes never beaten.

The Snow Hunters:
OR,
WINTER IN THE WOODS.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK.

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG SEAL-HUNTER," "IN THE
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VIII.—Jack Edgel's Adventures.

Where was Jack?
The boy had followed persistently upon the steps of the particular moose which he had marked down as his prey, forgetting all else but the determination to kill that moose, if he followed him to Labrador. Jack Edgel had in him the stuff of which we make our heroes—a determination which stood him in good stead in manhood, when we stood shoulder to shoulder in a struggle for life or death under sunnier skies than these. Then I saw Jack Edgel, when the regiment, riddled by grape and torn by shell, was wavering—when the color-guard had fallen, man by man—when the colonel, shot through the heart, fell, with his colors in his stiffened hand, and all seemed lost—then the stern determination of the man, as shadowed in the boy, flamed out.

"Give me the flag!" he cried. "Steady, Twenty-fourth! Old Jack is with you!" They followed him with cheers and inscribed a new name upon their colors. This was the Jack Edgel of other days.
Look at him now, flying on in the track of the moose over the snow. There was no crust, and the heavy animal broke through at every leap, and yet he held his own, gallantly. Once Jack was tempted to fire at him from behind, but knew that only a chance shot could reach a vital part, in his present position. He toiled on, the white dust flying from his shoes, while the maddened moose plunged forward through the snow, staining it with his blood—for he had been hit while coming out of the "ravine."

Jack was gaining, almost imperceptibly, but still gaining, inch by inch. The moose knew this, and redoubled his efforts to escape. He literally palpitated with fear and rage, as the rapid click of the snow-shoes told that the tireless pursuer was still upon the track. Animals are not reasoning beings, but there are times when they seem to reason, as in this instance, for at a place where the snow was not quite so deep, the desperate moose turned suddenly and charged Jack Edgel, his broad, palmed horns lowered, and the blood dropping from his muzzle staining the white drifts.

Jack was taken completely by surprise, and being new in snow-shoes, could not turn as rapidly as he would have liked. He knew better than to fire then, with the chance only at the guarded front of the infuriated beast; but, in turning, he caught his foot and plunged head-foremost into the drift. The moose, utterly astonished at this movement of his enemy, paused but a moment and then broke away again in his flight, and Jack arose to see his game speeding away again at his best speed.

"Confound the luck," muttered Jack, as he recommenced the chase. "Who expected the big thief to charge in that way? Go it! I'll follow if it takes all winter."

Again Jack began to gain, and once more the moose turned at bay and charged. This time the young huntsman was ready, for as the game wheeled, Jack sighted fairly behind the shoulder and gave it to him. He knew how to shoot, for Dave had been tireless in his teaching; the great beast gave a sort of half-human groan, and dropped lifeless on the snow.

Jack drew a long breath of relief, loaded his rifle carefully, and again advanced to satisfy himself that his work was well done. He drew his knife and opened the throat of the dead animal, and then sat down on the warm body to rest. As he did so, he noticed that the wind was rising.

"This won't do," he thought. "The tracks will be filled up, and I can't find my way back."

He again drew his knife and succeeded, after a great effort, in severing the head of the moose, a trophy which he would not give up, and swinging the rather heavy burden across his shoulders, he started back. He had not gone far when he became satisfied that it would not be easy to get back loaded down with the head, so he hung it on a limb, after cutting out the tongue.

Boy-like, he did not propose to give up every token of his victory. By this time the wind was blowing furiously, and Jack realized that he was in danger.

He paused and looked about him, for he could no longer see the tracks which the moose had left in the snow. The wind was blowing from east to west, and he was traveling north, so that if his friends were within hearing distance, their shouts would never reach his ears.

"It's no use fooling," thought Jack. "I've got to get somewhere or I'll have trouble."

He kept on for an hour, until satisfied that he was out of his latitude. Close at hand was a low range of rocky hills, and he hurried toward them, hoping to find shelter from the storm by getting in the lee of the rocks. When he reached them he was surprised to find an opening in the rocks forming the entrance to a sort of cave.

"I'm in luck," cried the boy hunter, joyfully. "Hip, hip, hurrah. Now, where is my lantern?"

Jack had been laughed at in the city when he bought a dark lantern, but he had it, and

always carried it ready to light. It was a very diminutive affair, and getting in the lee of the rocks, he struck a match and lit its little lamp.

Then, slinging his rifle to his back, he stepped into the entrance, and in a moment more was in a room perhaps twelve feet square, with a hard stone floor and stalactites hanging from the roof.

"Hooray!" exclaimed Jack. "I'll bring in a lot of wood and light a fire and make a night of it."

Leaving his lantern on the floor, Jack went out and succeeded in dragging a quantity of wood into the cave. Having done this, he began to light a fire, when he heard a purring sound, like the breathing of a cat, at the upper end of the cave.

"What in the world is that?" thought Jack, taking up the lantern. "Let's investigate a little."

"Walking quickly in the direction of the sound, he saw two beautiful little animals about the size of cats lying upon a pile of dry leaves. The moment he saw those animals the boy-hunter was seized with a desire to get out of that cave as quickly as possible, for these little creatures were young panthers!

Jack caught up his lantern and started for the mouth of the cave, but he had hardly done so when he heard the cry of a panther close at hand.

There was no chance of escape; so, springing back into the cave, he pushed the blazing heap which he had lighted into the entrance of the cave, and dropping on one knee, laid his rifle in the hollow of his hand and waited. He was not a moment too soon for he heard the sharp cry of the panther again, and saw a long, graceful body glide into the outer opening to the cavern. It was a female panther bearing in her mouth a piece of meat, doubtless torn from the moose which he had killed.

Few wild animals are to be found which do not dread the sight of a blazing fire and the panther was no exception to the rule. Seeing the fire she bounded suddenly back into the gloom and Jack could see two fiery eyes gleaming like stars while a fierce yell broke the silence, answered by a shrill snarl from the little animals in the leaves.

The Little White Flower.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

THE gas had not been lighted in the crystal lily-cups which drooped from the lofty ceiling, but from the steel-polished grate the soft light of seacoal fell in crimson shades over the elegant parlor, and over the two fair girls close together upon the purple velvet ottoman in front of the cheery blaze.

Over the white brow and golden waves of hair which surrounded the fair, aristocratic face of Blanche Heyford, and over the shimmering waves of lilac silk and frosted lace which fell in lustrous folds to the mossy carpet—that beautiful carpet, so trailed with feathery green ferns and vines, that one hardly knew whether they stepped on the floor of a Fifth Avenue parlor, or a nook of living, waving green in a summer woodland.

The soft firelight shone, too, on the sweet face, large, dewy, brown eyes, and darker brown braids of Juliet Wells—dear, brave, souled, true-hearted little Juliet, who had come from her simple home in the mountains of New Hampshire to spend a winter with her gay New York cousin, and to whom, used as she was to the steady New England ways, the manners and customs of the Gothamites were sometimes a mystery.

Juliet's dress was a fine, soft cashmere of glowing garnet, for, though not quite poor, she had not her stately cousin's wealth, and kept her silks for Sunday. But every curve and turn of her daintily rounded figure was displayed by the exquisite fit of the simple robe, and the delicate lace at her throat and wrists was scarce softer or whiter than the shell-tinted skin it shaded.

A silver arrow with a diamond flashing head fastened Blanche Heyford's abundant tresses, but from Juliet's nut-brown braids drooped, as their only adorning, a single waxen spray of fragrant white hyacinths, whose delicate perfume stole softly out on the warm air.

"It is time, Lester—Mr. St. John—was here," said Blanche, glancing at the little jeweled watch in her belt; "it will be too late to make a call to-night if he does not come soon."

Juliet said nothing, but in her girl's heart she was silently wondering if her cousin's air of proprietorship toward Mr. St. John really meant anything, and if she had a right to call him "Lester," as she sometimes did, beyond the right of old friendship.

Yes, it was likely—it was almost certain she had—no man could resist Blanche's beauty and sweetness—he was a noble fellow, and she was glad Blanche would be so happy. And little Juliet smothered a sigh which rose to her scarlet lips, without guessing why it came unbidden there.

Blanche was just glancing at her tiny watch again, with an exclamation of impatience, when Mr. St. John entered the parlor.

"What makes you so late?" cried Blanche, while Juliet noticed that his handsome face looked uncommonly grave, as Blanche rose to greet him.

"An accident—a sad one, Miss Blanche," was his earnest reply.

"To you?" cried Blanche, in quick alarm, while Juliet felt her own fresh breath come faster.

"No—to a little child. Sit down a moment, there is time to tell the story before we go out," said Mr. St. John, placing Blanche gently back in her seat.

And while they listened, in his deep, rich voice, St. John told the little story which had touched his manly heart.

"I was crossing William street on my way here, two hours ago," said he, "when a horse and buggy came dashing round the corner, and a little girl just in front of me, was knocked down and run over. I sprang forward and picked the child up, found she was not killed, as I expected, but too badly hurt to walk. I called a carriage, and was going to take the little thing to the children's hospital, but she begged to be taken home to her own mother, and she gave the address so intelligently that I took her there at once. On the way I learned that she had taken home some sewing for her mother, and she seemed so glad that she had not lost the four dollars she had received, when she fell, it was quite pitiful, for it told of a degree of want which we can hardly realize."

Blanche's beautiful face wore an expression half-pitiful, half-amused, but Juliet's brown eyes were full of tears, as St. John glanced up and went on with his story.

"I found her huddled up in a crowded tenement house on one of the back streets, a place of dirty and distress such as you ladies have often if ever seen. But the room was neat and clean, though so poor, and the child's mother was an intelligent, lady-like

woman, who had evidently been used to a better home than the place where I found her. Of course I had a doctor sent there, and I saw that they were provided with some necessities, and then I came right away."

"It's very sad, I'm sure, and I'm very sorry," said Blanche, rising again; "and now, Juliet, if we mean to call on Miss Allison to-night we must get ready."

"I shall go there at an early hour in the morning, to see that poor little thing again," pursued St. John, almost without heeding Blanche's interruption. "Would you like to go with me, ladies?"

"Me! Gracious, no! I never go into such poor places for anything!" cried Blanche, almost pettishly.

"Not for the sake of doing good?" asked St. John, gently as a woman.

"Oh, I couldn't do any good! Of course, if money is needed, I'll give it, but to go myself where one sees all sorts of disagreeable things—bah! not for anything!"

"I can provide all the money needed, but a woman's sympathy and kindness go further than a man's in such cases," said St. John, almost coldly.

"Oh, well, there are plenty of woman nurses to be got, then, who don't mind it. Of course such things happen in this world, but then one doesn't even like to hear of accidents and all that, it is so unpleasant, without going where one sees them."

"And how about those who not only hear the story, but must bear the pain, Miss Blanche?" asked St. John, still speaking coldly. "It's a pity, to be sure. But then we can't help it, you know. Come, Juliet, we must get ready."

As Juliet passed Mr. St. John, as she followed her cousin to don cloaks and furs, the spray of white hyacinth fell from her hair, and dropped at St. John's feet.

With a bow, he picked it up and restored it. She received it with a mute motion of thanks, but as she looked up, he caught the sympathy expressed in her sweet face, and the sparkle of tears upon her rounded cheek.

Left a moment alone, he leaned his head on his hand and sighed deeply, hurt by Blanche Heyford's selfishness. He had fast been making an idol of this beautiful girl. Was his golden image nothing but clay, after all? He sighed again, as the doubt crept strongly into his heart, for not for worlds would Lester St. John link his life with a heartless, selfish woman.

When he invited them to accompany him in his call on the little wounded child, Juliet had been about to say, eagerly, "I will go," but Blanche's hasty refusal checked her. If she would not go herself, it would offend her deeply to have Juliet go, at least with her friend, Mr. St. John. So Juliet said nothing, but she thought of it all the evening, while they were in gay company, and at last she made up her mind.

As the three passed from the carriage to the door, when they returned home, St. John felt a light touch on his arm.

He turned and met Juliet's earnest brown eyes.

"Mr. St. John, won't you please give me the little sick girl's street and number?" she asked, timidly.

"Certainly," he gave the required direction, then, with a sudden impulse, asked, "Why do you wish to know?"

"I—I thought we—Blanche might like to send some things to-morrow." And in the flood of lamplight streaming from the open front door, St. John saw the blush which stained her fair face.

"No doubt she will send something," he said, as they went in. But his tone was half-sarcastic, and in the light of this evening's experience, he did doubt it, very much, and so did Juliet.

Business detained Mr. St. John, and it was afternoon of the next day before he went to see his little protégée again. Some one had been there before him. The little girl, who was better, though still in much pain, held a choice book of handsome pictures in her hand, and upon the little table a small basket glowed with purple grapes and sunny oranges.

"A kind lady brought them this morning," said the little girl's mother, with a smile, as she saw his glance. "She said you told her of us last night."

St. John's heart warmed. Then Blanche had been here, after all! She had thought better of her words, and brought her sweet presence to lighten this poor sick-chamber.

"I did tell some ladies about you last night," he said, with a glad smile. And as he spoke his eyes fell on something beyond the basket of fruit—a tiny glass, holding a fragrant spray of little white flowers—a cluster of waxen, white hyacinths.

He recalled the flowers Juliet had dropped the night before—he had never seen Blanche wear any like them, and the doubt came back to his heart.

"That is sweetest of all," said the little girl; "the lovely lady brought them, too; they are her favorite flowers, she said. I never had any so pretty before."

"Was she a tall lady, with light hair?" he asked.

"No, sir; she was a little lady, with dark hair and such pretty brown eyes."

"She was one of earth's angels, I am sure of that," said the child's mother, fervently.

"She promised to come again, and I am so glad," said the child.

And St. John felt that he was glad, too, and somehow it was Juliet's face, instead of Blanche Heyford's, which followed him all day.

He did not go to Mr. Heyford's again for two or three days. When he did go, neither of the ladies asked after his little waif, and he volunteered no information.

But he noticed that Juliet's face colored and wore a conscious look when his glance rested upon it. And in the sick-room he found almost daily traces of her presence.

It was two or three weeks, however, and the little invalid was slowly but surely recovering, before they met there. Then Juliet was much confused, and would have made her escape as soon as she could.

St. John, however, rose to accompany her when she left, and, when they were in the street together, he said:

"Miss Juliet, the day is almost like spring, I want you to take a little ramble in the Park with me."

"If Blanche would not be uneasy at my absence—" hesitated Juliet.

"I will take charge of Blanche's uneasiness, and of you, too, so come," he said, smiling and drawing her hand through his arm.

So Juliet submitted, and let him take her to the Park. It was not long before they wandered to a secluded nook in the Ramble, and before a little rustic summer-house, St. John paused.

"It is warm and sunny enough to rest here a little," said he. "Let us go in."

"Now," said St. John, "I want to tell you why I brought you here. May I?"

"I suppose you may," said Juliet, beginning to tremble without knowing why.

But St. John appeared in no haste to tell her, after all.

He sat quite silent a few moments, then suddenly he bent forward, threw his arm around Juliet and in a few swift words told her something she had never guessed at.

"But, Blanche!" she whispered, half-drawing from his clasping arm.

"I will be truthful—I was near loving Blanche. Do you remember the night you dropped the flowers from your hair at my feet?"

"Oh, yes."

"That night, for the first time, I read Blanche's heart and yours aright. I found you out the very next day, my little good angel, by the little white flowers you left in Ellen's sick-room. I have known all your goodness, darling, and it is you, not Blanche, I want. Say, Juliet, may I have you, pet?"

And Juliet, yielding up a sweet secret, long hidden in her own heart, said yes, and gave her sweet mouth to St. John's earnest, almost solemn betrothal kiss.

And Blanche? Blanche was a little disappointed, but she was too selfish to love enough to suffer much, so she consoled herself with the thought that there were plenty of better (richer, she meant,) matches left, and she was quite willing Juliet should have Lester St. John.

LEAVES
From a Lawyer's Life.

BY A. GOULD PENN.

Tried For Her Life.

THE cold November winds rattled my office windows, and rushed against the door as if striving to enter and make sad havoc among the various books and papers scattered over the writing-table. The little sign that hung above the door creaked ominously as it swung in the wind, bearing to the view of passers-by the announcement:

Y. A. SMITH, ATTORNEY AT LAW.

But I, the humble occupant of the dingy little office, paid but little heed to the elements raging without, for, seated in my old arm-chair, with my feet on the fender of the grate, and my head thrown back into my hands clasped behind it, I was deep in reverie.

A year ago to-day! Yes, one long, weary year of waiting and watching for clients who failed to come. A year that had brought me nothing but a bare subsistence.

Should I stick to it another year, or should I abandon the law, and engage in some other pursuit? These and kindred questions occupied my mind, and I glanced at my seedy habiliments. Coat out at elbows, a white cotton sock peeping out of the side of my boot, and a general appearance of rustiness that spoke of poverty.

"Stick to it, my boy; perseverance wins." The words of my old preceptor came to my mind. Yes, I'd stick!

Suddenly my door opened, the cool air rushed in; enter my special friend, Doctor John Kinney. With a bang he closed the door, and dropped into a vacant chair, without uttering a word.

Now Kinney was a young man of about my age, who had been more successful in his chosen profession than I had in mine. He could wear the best of broadcloth and laugh at trouble, for his was a sunny, generous nature. But why this sudden exhibition of discontent and even despair, which his look and manner indicated?

"Well, what's up now?" I demanded.

"Trouble, Smith; a deuced mess," he answered, shortly.

"Humph! been taking some of your own medicine?"

"Worse than that, Smith; somebody else has, and that is just the rub. But, haven't you heard the news?"

"News? No, I haven't heard of anything startling."

"Old March is dead! poisoned; and Nelly March arrested for the crime!"

"Whew! how did that happen? Tell me all about it."

And then his tongue loosened and he told me the strange story. Nelly March was the niece of an eccentric and wealthy old gentleman, Horatio March, and had been adopted by him and raised and educated from the time of her widowed mother's death, when Nelly was but eight years old.

Rich and childless, he had opened his bachelor heart and taken in the little orphan girl, determined to make her the sole heir to all his wealth.

At eighteen, Nelly was a beautiful and accomplished lady, gay and fond of society, and indulged by her uncle in all her heart could wish.

But lately, Horatio March had been quite ill, and young Doctor Kinney had been called in to attend him. His illness was not of a serious nature, but after being confined to his room some three weeks he was convalescent, when suddenly he was seized with violent symptoms and died.

The circumstances were such that suspicions had been aroused and the coroner's inquest developed the fact that Horatio March had died of poison, but by whom administered it was not conjectured.

Suspicion naturally pointed to Nelly, who had been his nurse, and the tongue of scandal took up the tale and reported that she had poisoned her old uncle in order that she might the sooner come into possession of his wealth. Hence, Nelly March had been arrested for the murder of her uncle.

John paused when he had related this much, and sat stolidly gazing into the fire. I waited for him to speak, but he remained apparently absorbed in thought.

"Well, Kinney," said I, "this is a singular thing, indeed; it looks bad for Miss Nelly, as she had sole charge of Mr. March during his illness. But of course she is innocent. There is some great mistake, evidently."

"Of course she is innocent, my dear Smith; of course she is; but how to establish it? Heavens—"

And my eyes were then opened to another fact; John Kinney was in love with Nelly March.

Rising suddenly he exclaimed:

"And now, my dear boy, you must help me out of this trouble—you must clear Miss Nelly. I am authorized to employ you as junior counsel; old Grubbs has already been retained. Here is your retainer," and he thrust a bill into my hand and hurriedly left the office.

I looked at the note. One hundred dollars! I was awake! or had I only been dreaming? No; here was the money. And at last I had a case!

It is needless to say how I put my mind to this case. I hurried off to consult with old

Grubbs about it, and found him completely nonplussed by the fearful array of facts against our client. But I felt convinced that Nelly March was innocent, and set to work to find the proof. For a long time I was baffled at every turn, and came near giving up in despair, but I gave it my whole attention, and at last was rewarded by a gleam of hope, and finally I could see my way clearly. But I kept my secret even from old Grubbs, and impatiently awaited the day of trial.

It came at last, and it was with difficulty I could keep myself sufficiently cool and clear-headed.

The evidence offered by the State in prosecution was circumstantially clear and decisive, and Grubbs felt despondent, while the poor, unhappy prisoner was overwhelmed with grief. I saw that the popular feeling was against her, and the stolid jury were little affected by her tears. At length the witnesses for the defense were called, and Doctor Kinney was placed in the witness box. His testimony elicited nothing but the fact that, on the morning of the death of Mr. March, he had sent, by his office-boy, some calomel for his patient, which was the only medicine that had been used for nearly a week.

It was in vain that Grubbs questioned our witnesses; no testimony of a favorable nature could he procure.

"Let David Spike be called," said I.

Accordingly David Spike, a sleepy-looking youth of eighteen, took his stand, and I began to examine him.

"What is your occupation, David?"

"Student with Doctor Kinney," he answered, briefly.

I proceeded, and by dint of much questioning brought from him the following evidence: On the morning in question, Doctor Kinney had ordered him to make out three half-grain doses of calomel, and take them to Mr. March's, with directions that the doctor himself wrote out.

"Have you been accustomed to compound prescriptions?" I asked.

"I have. I always prepare the doctor's prescriptions, and see that medicines are delivered."

"Do you profess to be thoroughly acquainted with the medical names of various drugs, and their properties?"

"Yes, sir. I have made that a study, and think I can give the Latin name of most drugs used in practice."

"Very well, Mr. Spike; will you give me the Latin name for calomel?"

"Yes, sir; it is *Hydrargyri Chloridum Mite*," he answered, confidently.

"What kind of a bottle did you keep that particular drug in?"

"A six-ounce white glass bottle with glass stopper."

"Do you recognize this as a similar bottle?" asked I, holding it up to view of witness and jury.

"Yes, sir, that is the identical bottle. I recognize it by certain marks made by myself on the label."

All eyes were bent upon us, and a silence pervaded the entire court-room.

"Now, Mr. Spike," I continued, "what position on the shelf did this bottle occupy? Was it alone or among others?"

"It was among other medicines of that class."

"Were there any poisons near it?"